A Slice of the Good Life

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A Slice of the Good Life

by margot16

Summary

Cars, parties, music and much more. This is the happy ending they all deserve. A post-series slice of life story. Mostly general slice of life with some added romance later.

Notes

A post-series slice of life story. Mostly general slice of life with some added romance later. Contains some in-depth descriptions of cars and the Tokyo cityscape. Definitely more to come but I have no clue how long this is going to be or where it's going to go. Enjoy!

Reunion

It had been just short of 11 months since the so-called “fall of Honnouji”, and the defeat of Ragyo Kiryuin at the hands of her two daughters. One of those daughters, jet black hair mussed from a night of restless sleep, slowly lifted her head from the pillow to meet the rays of sunlight creeping through her closed blinds. She tried to clear her eyes of sleep, blowing the single red streak of hair from her face as she did so. Grudgingly, as if the sun was inconveniencing her by being up already, she made her way to the window and wrenched the blinds open, greeting the new day with a sense of defiance. Ryuko Matoi reached her arms above her head in a lazy stretch, yawning. As her eyes slowly reopened and adjusted to the bright light, she surveyed the view from her apartment bedroom window, situated three quarters of the way up a modest highrise in Minato City, Tokyo. Her eyes were immediately drawn to Tokyo bay, former home of Honnouji academy and all of the memories to go along with it. The academy was long gone now of course, demolished and sent to the bottom of the bay.

The last 11 or so months had been a whirlwind for Ryuko and everyone she knew. Ryuko's long-lost sister Satsuki had been thrust into yet another firm leadership role with the defeat of their mother, assuming control of not only the Kiryuin clan and all of its assets, but REVOCS corporation itself. Determined to right the wrongs REVOCS had committed against the world, Satsuki had embarked on a year-long tour of reconstruction and rehabilitation, attempting to transition REVOCS from an evil mega-corporation to a respectable and benevolent competitor on the world stage. So far she was succeeding, and while doing so was also discovering and dealing with many of the hidden assets their mother had stored away across the globe. Trying to take over the world left one with many secrets, after all. Ryuko had to admit, she was brilliantly proud of her older sister, despite the crushing loss she felt at times when she realized she was given a sister, only for her to be almost completely absent from her life these past months.

After their eighteenth birthdays and subsequent graduation from high school, Ryuko and Mako had moved from the Mankanshoku household to their own comfortable, two-bedroom apartment in this high-rise overlooking the bay, in anticipation of their going to University in addition to the interest of their overall independence. They lived a comfortable life here, and they were provided for in all that they could want. Being a member of the Kiryuin clan had its perks (financially, at least), and the last month or so had been filled with lazy days, shopping and a general break from hectic life altogether. It was exactly what her and Mako needed, but Ryuko couldn't help but feel there was still something missing from her life. As much as she hated to admit it, she wished Satsuki could be there to experience this all with them. Ryuko missed her terribly.

Ryuko was just about to turn from the window and try to sleep again when she heard her door burst open, and before she could turn to address the intruder she was tackled from behind by a small coconut-headed shape, a solitary call ringing in her ears:

“RYUKO-CHAAAAAAAN!”

Ryuko groaned. “It's too early for this kind of stuff, Mako. Lemme go back to sleep for, like, four more hours and we can try again.”

Mako took Ryuko's face in her hands and smushed her cheeks together, staring into her eyes intently and whispering frantically: “Ryuko-chan, Ryuko-chan! Quickly, you have to get dressed! You have a visitor, this is no time to go back to sleep!”

“A visitor, wait who-”

“No questions, Ryuko-chan! Just make yourself decent and hurry!”

With that, Mako planted a friendly kiss on Ryuko's forehead and darted from the room, closing the door behind her. Ryuko stood perplexed for about thirty seconds, running through the list of people she saw regularly in her mind, trying to remember if she had forgotten a date or an important meeting. She couldn't think of a single thing, however, and quickly began to put herself together in order to greet this mystery guest. She frantically threw on a random t-shirt, followed by a pair of jeans and her signature white-and-black jacket. It wasn't particularly original or fancy, but this would certainly have to do for someone showing up out of nowhere and not giving her time to properly prepare herself. Ryuko briefly stepped in front of the bathroom mirror, correcting her always-messy hair as best she could and making sure her red streak was prominently displayed at the forefront of her locks. Taking a deep breath, she moved towards the door to the shared living room. “Alright, who-” Ryuko was unable to finish her thought, as her jaw steadily made its way towards the floor.

Standing in the middle of living room, looking a bit sheepish but not at all unhappy, was someone so stunningly beautiful and yet instantly recognizable. The morning light shone through the windows behind her, framing her in a golden aura that was all too familiar. She stood a full head taller than Ryuko, her once-long straight jet black hair now cut to her shoulders. She was fit, her posture rigid and perfect, but unlike times in the past when she had been cold and unwelcoming, this time she had a small smile on her face, clearly happy to see Ryuko. And Ryuko was overjoyed to see her, for this woman was none other Satsuki Kiryuin, Ryuko's long-lost sister and now-CEO of one of the world's most famous and infamous corporate entities. She was also not due back to Tokyo for several more months.

“Surprise, imouto.” Satsuki said quietly, clearly nervous. This was the first time the sisters had seen each other in more than half a year, and clearly it was something of an event if it even had the indomitable Satsuki Kiryuin's heart racing.

Unable to let out more than a choked squeak, Ryuko threw herself into her older sister's embrace. The raw emotion of seeing each other after such a long time was too much for Ryuko to form words, so instead she decided on languishing in her sister's arms, enveloping her in a tight hug that felt like it lasted for days. When they finally broke away from each other, Ryuko held Satsuki at arms length and stared into her face, refusing to believe she was actually home.

“I-I-I can't...believe it! You're home, but...how? You were supposed to be gone for at least two more months!” Ryuko stammered.

Satsuki simply continued to smile her small, simple smile, raising one of her distinct eyebrows. “It's fairly simple, actually. I've sent a team of my top executives on to the final leg of my tour, so that I could come home early and surprise you. Plus, I needed to be absolutely sure you and Mako hadn't completely destroyed Tokyo in my absence. A big sister worries, after all.”

“Yeah well, we've been good little girls haven't we? We can't have nee-san worrying.” Ryuko commented, sneering and glancing over at Mako. The subtlety of the joke was lost on her, however, and she simply nodded her head furiously and said “Hai, Sastuki-sama!” courteously. Ryuko rolled her eyes, returning her gaze to Satsuki.

“Well, I guess I should say...welcome home.” Ryuko said to Satsuki, looking expectant.

Satsuki, sharp as ever, realized the irony of their reversed roles and snorted in amusement. “Good to be back...imouto.” Satsuki said, both of the sisters shaking their heads in amusement. “Anyways, Ryuko, I've come home with a purpose. Well, in truth I have several purposes. Perhaps we can have lunch and discuss it? It will be my treat, of course.”

Ryuko smirked once again, batting her eyes and responding to her sister using a singsong sarcasm. “Of course, Satsuki, but I don't know why you have to say it's your treat. It's *always* your treat!”

Satsuki snorted and shook her head. “Tactful as always. You should clean yourself up a bit before we take our leave, maybe take a shower and put on some decent clothes. I'll not have you joining me for lunch looking like a street urchin.”

Ryuko grumbled and made her way back to her room to fulfill Satsuki's request. As Satsuki and Mako idly chatted in the living room, Ryuko couldn't help but marvel at how clearly attached she had gotten to a woman that up until a year ago was trying to kill her. “I guess finding out someone is actually your long-lost sister is a surprisingly stabilizing force for a relationship”, thought Ryuko as she stepped into the shower. Regardless of their checkered past, Ryuko was beyond glad to be able to spend the day with this woman she hadn't seen in so long. Finding someone like Ragyo, simultaneously an object of shared hatred and a constant goal to work towards, was an unconventional but clearly successful bonding experience for the two sisters.

“You clean up well.” Satsuki said as her and Ryuko rode the elevator down to the lobby of the apartment building. Ryuko smirked and looked over at Satsuki. “Yeah, well...it's not every day your long-lost sister comes home to surprise you with a free lunch.” Sastuki snorted and shook her head, Ryuko smiling wide and mischievous. Ryuko had indeed cleaned up well, donning a clean yellow t-shirt under her signature jacket, wrapping a long red scarf around her neck. Her hair was cleaner and less messy than before, parted neatly in the middle with just the right amount of muss, her red streak prominently displayed as always. She had replaced her jeans with a new black pleated skirt that came to rest about halfway up her thighs. Finally, in place of her normal dirty white high-tops, she wore a brand new pair of black and red Adidas high-tops, similar in style to her old ones but admittedly much more stylish. Shopping with Mako had its benefits.

Satsuki was wearing what had come to be her signature style, a tight-fitting white button-up blouse neatly tucked into a long pastel-colored skirt, with a simple pair of flats. Certainly nothing like her student council president's uniform or even Junketsu, but still somehow exuding the same subtlety and elegance that was essential to her personality. Ryuko thought it suited her.

As they transitioned from the lobby into the bustling city street, Satsuki motioned for Ryuko to follow her into a more secluded alley on the side of her building. “I'll be providing our transportation for today.” Satsuki said matter-of-factly, as she took a key out of her pocket, pointed it into the alley, and pressed the unlock button. As Ryuko's gaze followed the direction that Satsuki was pointing the key, she almost laughed out loud at the headlamps flashing on the car in front of her. It was a brand new, pristine Mercedes-Benz CL550 sport coupe. The color of the paint was a perfect onyx black, and its flashing headlamps flooded the small alleyway with a crystal blue light. The car was so appropriate for Satsuki: elegant, subtle, powerful, and most importantly not at all garish or flashy. Ryuko was impressed.

“Wow, Sats, you mean to tell me you're not going to make Soroi drive us around all day?”

Satsuki just smiled and began moving towards the driver side door of the large sport coupe, popping the seal and letting the door swing open. “Soroi has worked for our family for as long as I can remember, he is more than deserving of some time off. Plus, I'm...trying to become a little bit more independent. I don't wish to fulfill the stereotype of the coddled Kiryuin princess. At least not *completely* .” Satsuki winked at Ryuko and slid into the driver's seat. Ryuko followed suit, hopping into the passenger seat. The scent of new car and leather filled her nostrils, and Ryuko had to admit to herself that she could get used to traveling in style like this.

Satsuki started the car, the powerful engine giving off a deep growl. The crystal blue headlamps flooded the alleyway once again, shadows dancing around the shaded area as Satsuki shifted into drive and pulled the car out into the bustling Tokyo traffic. “I know of a cafe near a small park in a quiet part of Ginza, I think it would be a perfect place to catch up.” Satsuki said, looking briefly over at Ryuko when they came to rest at a stop light. Ryuko hadn't been listening, instead choosing to stare intently out the dark tinted window at the hustle and bustle of Japan's largest city rushing by. “Huh? Oh, uh, yeah...that sounds fine. Whatever you want, sis.”

They arrived at the cafe soon after, picking a quiet table outside on the walk. It overlooked the park across the way where children were playing and people interacted with one another, enjoying the nice weather. It all seemed like a dream to Ryuko. Here she was, enjoying a day of nice weather in a beautiful city, sitting across the table from someone whom less than a year ago she was intent on killing. That part was really more like a nightmare, she thought. But, Ryuko supposed, what is done is done, and all that matters now is that she was about to enjoy a peaceful meal with her sister. Things could be a hell of a lot worse. She only wished Senketsu were still here...

“Ryuko? Is everything alright?” Satsuki looked concerned, and Ryuko realized that tears had filled her eyes. She shook her head quickly, rubbing her eyes and smiling sadly at Satsuki.

“Sorry, I was...thinking of Senketsu. It's still hard sometimes. I promise I'm fine though!” Ryuko sneered devilishly and clenched a fist in front of her face, trying to cover for herself.

Satsuki just shook her head and smiled sadly back at Ryuko, taking one of Ryuko's hands in her own. “Imouto,” she began firmly, an all too familiar authoritative tone creeping into her voice, “if there is ever anything that bothers you, I want you to understand that I will always be here for you. I understand that I have been absent these past months and it is one of my greatest regrets, not being here to see you as much as I would like. But that time is over, and I am here now to be your rock whenever you need me.” Her face fell, her hard features softening significantly. “Ryuko, I...I'm so sorry I haven't been here. I was caught up in work and forgot my obligation as a sister to protect you-”

“Satsuki, please. I don't need protecting, I'm a fighter. It's like, the one thing I'm sure I'm good at. I understand why you needed to be gone for so long, and it really is okay. I'm just glad you're back now. Plus, if you didn't do your job as REVOCS HBIC how are we gonna keep living this life of luxury?”

They both laughed, Ryuko's loud and brash, Satsuki's small and lilting, mouth covered. They both ordered when the waitress came to their table, enjoying a pot of tea and sharing a delicious assortment of small finger foods. The two sisters caught up on their lives over the past months, Ryuko recounting her time finishing school and worrying about researching universities with Mako, Satsuki filling Ryuko in on the state of REVOCS and her travels surveying what assets their family had stored around the globe. As Satsuki placed what could be considered a *very* generous tip into the billfold the waitress left them, the conversation switched to Ryuko's eighteenth birthday two months prior.

“Yeah, I mean it really wasn't a big deal. Mako took me out for dinner, and it was nice. I don't feel any older, though.” Ryuko stared absentmindedly at the people walking by.

Satsuki caught her gaze. “Ryuko. I have something for you. A belated birthday gift of sorts. Something to make up for all this time I was gone.”

Ryuko started, “Satsuki, wait, you really don't need-”

“Stop there, I won't hear of it. Now come.” Satsuki interrupted, getting up from the table and returning to her car. Ryuko stumbled after her, altogether confused but also somewhat excited to see what was in store.

Satsuki drove them further into the city center, turning down narrower and narrower streets as their journey continued. Satsuki continually halted Ryuko's inquiries as to where they were going and what this “gift” of hers actually was, until Ryuko gave up on the issue entirely and resigned herself to silently staring out the window. After a good half an hour of dealing with inner-city traffic and back routes, Satsuki brought the powerful Mercedes to a stop in a narrow alleyway, opposite several steel industrial garage doors. “We're here.” Satsuki said as she popped her door open. Ryuko followed her older sister to the front of one of the doors, marked with a large yellow spray-stencilled “15”. Satsuki picked out a small key on her

keyring, unlocked the garage door and easily pulled it up and open, revealing a large dark and dusty space within. As Satsuki entered and powered on the bank of fluorescent lights on the ceiling, Ryuko could see that the large white space was empty spare for one solitary shape in the center, covered in a tan tarp.

“I found this while touring REVOCS facilities in Italy, in a garage that our mother so cleverly disguised on paper as a storage facility.” As Ryuko slowly entered the space to stand in front of whatever was under the tarp, Satsuki wrenched the tarp away in one fell swoop and revealed what lie underneath. For the second time in so many hours, Ryuko found her jaw resting comfortably on the floor.

The white light emanating from the ceiling glinted in several places across the pristine coat of black paint, shining as well from the four matte gold five-spoke wheels, sheathed in TRX tires. Ryuko moved slowly around the vehicle, mouth agape, unable to think. She ran her hand down the smooth lateral line from the front of the hood as she walked around the car, peering inside at the mint-condition caramel leather interior, the squared back end with aesthetically perfect taillight assembly, all the way to the front of the car once again where her eyes were drawn to the hood badge: a golden shield, on which was depicted a horse rearing up triumphantly. Satsuki began, “This is-”

Ryuko finished her thought, “-a 1987 Ferrari 412 GT. My dream car...” she trailed off.

Numb, Ryuko felt a strong hand on her shoulder, and as she turned to look at her older sister she felt Satsuki place something small and metallic into her palm, closing her hand around the object. Ryuko looked down at the key, the same proud shield that was on the front of the car also pressed onto the key face. “It's yours. Happy birthday, imouto.” Satsuki smiled at her younger sister, stepping back to take the scene in. To both of their surprise, Ryuko sunk to her knees in front of the car, her shoulders beginning to heave until she was sobbing uncontrollably. Sastuki immediately knelt down at her side, rubbing her back to console her sister. “Ryuko, what's wrong? Do you not like it? Is it too much?” Worry crept into Satsuki's voice, clearly unhappy at the prospect of upsetting Ryuko in such a way.

Instead, Ryuko replied “No, no, that's not it at all...this is just the best gift anyone has ever given me...” Ryuko looked up at Satsuki, and as her hair fell away from her face Satsuki was surprised again to see Ryuko smiling a wide, fierce grin, stars in her eyes. She punched her fist into the air over her head and yelled, with a voice Satsuki had heard many times before, “THIS. IS. AWESOME!” Ryuko sprang to her feet, enveloping Satsuki in a bear hug, picking her up and spinning her around until they were both dizzy. “I'm happy you like the car Ryuko, but can you *please* put me down before I vomit?!” Ryuko sat Satsuki down in front of her, gripped her arms and stared intently into Satsuki's face.

“Thank you.” Ryuko said seriously, before darting to the driver's side door. “You are most welcome. After all, I simply couldn't let my little sister ride around on that death trap motorcycle any longer.” Satsuki replied, as Ryuko opened the door and slid into the driver's seat. The car really was a perfect fit for Ryuko, and she already looked to be suitably at home

behind the wheel. Satsuki leaned into the open passenger window as Ryuko inserted the key into the ignition and turned, the powerplant of the Italian machine coming to life first with a high-pitched whine, then the throaty roar that was so emblematic of a 12-cylinder Ferrari engine. The headlights elegantly rose from their place hidden near the sides of the hood, shining a soft yellow glow on the far wall of the garage. Ryuko gunned the car a few times, beaming at Satsuki as if she were hearing the sound of a beautiful symphony for the first time.

“So, nee-san. What say we go for a drive?” Ryuko said suavely, gunning the engine one last time for effect. Satsuki simply popped the door and slid into the passenger seat, a small smile on her face.

Ryuko really was a great driver. The mid-afternoon sun flowing through the windshield made her warm skin glow, absolutely content and perfectly in her element. She easily darted the car through the busy city streets of Chuo district, shifting up from fourth into fifth gear as they sped onto the entrance ramp of the expressway. They headed west out of the city for what seemed to Satsuki to be about an hour, before exiting onto route 20 towards Mount Takao. After another 30 minutes of driving through winding, hilly roads, Ryuko pulled the Ferrari off of the highway and into a secluded overlook with a view of the surrounding green hills.

“Why don't we hang out here and watch the sunset?” Ryuko suggested, the engine of the car humming pleasingly as she came to a stop.

“That sounds nice. There's more I'd like to discuss with you anyways.” Satsuki replied as Ryuko turned the car off, popping her door open and stepping outside. Both girls stretched their stiff limbs out, the yellow evening sun bathing them in its warm glow. Ryuko made her way to the hood of the car, staring at it fondly one more time before planting her backside on the hood, patting the spot next to her and looking at Satsuki expectantly. Satsuki sat, and they both turned their heads to admire the view of the surrounding hillsides, bathed in the warm light of the waning day. For a while the two girls basked in the silence of the countryside, Ryuko absentmindedly laying her head on Satsuki's shoulder. Satsuki was surprised but not displeased, and made no move to refuse the show of affection.

“Ryuko.” Satsuki said quietly, Ryuko turning her large eyes up towards her sister's face.
“Yeah?”

“The one year anniversary of all the happened at Honnouji academy is fast approaching. While I would usually be one for a formal affair of remembrance, I feel what would be more in order is a party of some sort. A...well, what a more fashionable sort might call a 'rager'.” Ryuko snorted in amusement at the phrase, but Satsuki continued in earnest. “It could be something that we could put on, as sisters, in order to not only honor but also celebrate this life that everyone fought so hard to protect.”

Ryuko smiled excitedly at Satsuki. “That sounds like a great idea, Sats! Although if it's gonna be a rager as you say, I'll have to give you some advice in that department.”

Satsuki laughed demurely, looking out once again at the hills around them. “There's quite the fashionable rooftop nightclub that just opened in Shinjuku. I thought I might rent it out for the occasion, and invite all former Honnouji students to attend. We would be the hosts, of course. I can't imagine something more poetic, former rivals turned doting sisters, hosting a party for all the former students.”

Ryuko chuckled. “Yeah, it'll definitely be something special. There'll be a lot of details to work out, though” Ryuko said as she took her head from Satsuki's shoulder, getting up and walking to the railing as the last vestiges of sunlight drained from above the furthest hillside. She turned to face Satsuki as she spoke. “What will we do for music? And people to staff the event? And BOOZE?!”

Satsuki shook her head, amused. “Well, alcohol and the staff to provide it shouldn't be a problem at all. I'll make doubly sure that entertainment and dutch courage will be in ample supply. As for music...well, let's just say I personally know that Japan's hottest rising DJ duo has been looking for a gig for some time. This should be the perfect venue for their coming out.”

Ryuko cocked her head in confusion, “Oh yeah? And who's that?”

The edges of Satsuki's mouth slowly curved upward, a hint of mischievousness present in her features. “It's a surprise, of course. You'll just have to wait and find out. Come, let us return to the city. It's getting dark.” Satsuki motioned for her sister and returned to her place in the passenger seat. Ryuko sat back into the cockpit of the Ferrari comfortably, starting the engine with a melodic growl. She shifted into first and quickly made her way back onto route 20, beginning their long trek back home to Tokyo proper. Ryuko had to admit, the party really was the perfect idea to celebrate the anniversary of events from a year past. She also had to

admit to herself that the prospect of a rager filled with all of her former friends and enemies was an unusual but extremely exhilarating idea. As the car sped back onto the Chuo expressway towards Tokyo, thoughts of planning this grand event flitted through the two sisters minds as fast as the streetlights flitted past their car windows.

Revelry

Chapter Notes

> The party begins! WARNING: Don't continue to read this story if you don't wanna feel good inside.

At exactly 7:36 AM, Ryuko sat bolt upright, entirely unable to return to sleep. Ryuko couldn't remember the last time she was this awake so early. Her sleep schedule usually consisted of falling asleep around two or three in the morning, and not returning to the land of the living until at least eleven. When Satsuki had suggested the idea of hosting a Honnouji one-year reunion party three weeks ago, Ryuko had been admittedly very excited about the idea. Especially the idea of getting drunk and dancing like an idiot. But now the day of the party was upon them all, and while Ryuko still felt excitement, she also felt a considerable amount of nervousness. The idea of hosting all these people, most of which were former enemies-turned-begrudging-friends she hadn't seen in almost a year, set butterflies flapping around in her stomach. She clenched her fists in front of her, speaking to herself in a growl through her clenched teeth: “I defeated Ragyo Kiryuin for fuck's sake! I'm not going to let some party send me running off like a scared little schoolgirl.” She almost believed it.

Getting up from the bed and stretching like she did every morning, Ryuko once again made her way over to the window, wrenching it open and letting the cool early-morning breeze wash over her. It was still early enough for a low blanket of clouds to be just now starting to dissipate, Tokyo below her still fairly quiet for a city of sixteen million people. Ryuko felt like she was intruding upon a secret world being up this early. Reflecting on the past weeks since her sister's surprise return, she thought about how if the past year was a whirlwind then the last three weeks were like entering the stormwall. It had been a constant barrage of phone calls, emails, transactions, interviews and logistics. Satsuki of course handled it with grace and dignity, Ryuko having to fight the boredom of planning and just tell herself it was all for fun in the end. She certainly hoped the fruits of their labor would pay off in the way she hoped.

Forgoing a shower for the moment, Ryuko donned her usual jeans and a hoodie, grabbing her keys and leaving her apartment heading towards the elevators. After hitting the button marked “G”, Ryuko leaned against the mirrored wall of the elevator and let out a long, steady stream of breath. She closed her eyes until the bell of the elevator reaching the garage level jolted her from her relaxation. Ryuko smiled as the doors opened. She was going to see her baby again.

Her baby of course was not anything of the living variety, more along the lines of an Italian 2+2 sport coupe. Ryuko saw the distinctive rear end of her Ferrari 412 GT jutting out between two small Japanese hatchbacks, the round taillights sitting just slightly outwards from the body. Ryuko approached the car, admiring its unconventional beauty and patting the

top of the trunk thoughtfully. Mako had almost done a backflip when Ryuko had returned with the car the night Satsuki had given it to her, making her signature pose positioning sideways peace signs over her eyes and howling “Waaaaaaaaaaah!”. Ryuko chuckled, making her way to the driver door and sliding into the comfortable leather seat.

Starting the car was like a symphony to Ryuko each and every time, the sweet combination of high-pitched whine and throaty roar reverberating around the cement garage pleasingly. Ryuko closed her eyes and let the sound wash over her for a while, until opening her eyes and wrapping one hand around the steering wheel, the other shifting the car into reverse. “I'll never get tired of this...” she muttered, her expression switching from blank contentment to a steely grin as she slammed the Ferrari into first gear. All twelve cylinders screamed and tires squealed as she exited the garage, Ryuko slipping the car onto the still-quiet street and heading for the waterfront.

Coffee in hand, Ryuko sat on the hood of her car parked in an empty parking lot along the Tokyo waterfront, peering out over the calm water. She lazily watched cars and trains slowly cross the Rainbow Bridge across Tokyo bay, sipping her coffee thoughtfully and pondering the day ahead. She decided to call Satsuki to check up on things on her end, Satsuki undoubtedly having been awake for hours now. Her refined discipline meant Satsuki rose before most in order to greet the day with her fullest potential. Ryuko pressed her older sister's name in her phone and held it to her ear as it rang, Satsuki picking up almost immediately and speaking first.

“Ryuko. I'm surprised to be hearing from you this early, is everything alright?”

“Oh yeah, everything's fine. I couldn't sleep is all. I'm down by the waterfront drinking coffee and was wondering how things were going on your end for tonight. Is there anything else you need me to do?” Ryuko shifted her phone to her other hand, setting her empty coffee cup on the hood.

“I see. I can assure you that everything is taken care of. The staff have been arranged, the supplies have all been payed for, and the nightclub is ours for as long as we need it. All we need do now is enjoy the fruits of our labor.”

Ryuko smiled. She knew Satsuki would come through. If there was anything in this world her sister was a master of, it was planning. Her nervousness subsided slightly. “Alright, sounds good. I guess I'll see you tonight then?”

“Of course, however I would like you to be there some time before the guests arrive, to help with overseeing the setup and whatever last-minute problems we might encounter. Also, be sure to eat a substantial meal beforehand. If I know you, and I do, you will be drinking a substantial amount of alcohol.”

Ryuko chuckled. “Yeah, thanks *mom*. I'll see you tonight. Be sure to wear something *extra* kawaii. You never know who might be there!”

Satsuki huffed quietly and began to respond, clearly flustered. “I always-”

“Aw, what? You're breaking up! I'm going through a tunnel!” Ryuko made a static noise into the receiver before hanging up, cackling to herself.

As Ryuko threw her coffee cup away and returned to her car, she noticed that the early-morning clouds had begun to dissipate and the sun was peeking out from behind them, landing its rays on Ryuko's upturned face for the first time today. It looked to be perfect weather for a massive party, balmy and comfortable. Ryuko nodded her head and steeled herself for the day and subsequent night to come, starting her car and beginning to make her way back to the apartment to begin her preparations.

Ryuko took a deep breath as she rode the elevator to the top of the building in the heart of Shinjuku, eagerly awaiting arrival at the rooftop nightclub that was to be their base of party operations for the evening. She looked herself over a final time in the mirrored sides of the elevator, examining her attire. She had donned a simple solid black dress, sleeveless and tight from shoulders to waist, then becoming loose and flowing, the hem of the skirt landing halfway down her thighs, an optimal length. Her hair was pulled into a small ponytail, away from her face. Save, of course, for the signature red streak in her hair, which fell near her left eye away from the rest of her locks. Finally, she had once again slipped on her new pair of red and black Adidas high-tops, slightly different than they had been before. In a fitting homage, Ryuko had painted a black “x” pattern on the right toe, and a recognizable red,

orange and yellow eye on the left. It was her small way of honoring a lost friend, on this the year anniversary of their shared victory at Honnouji academy.

The elevator chimed and the doors slid open smoothly, revealing the nightclub space itself. Ryuko stepped out into the space, admiring her sister's choice of venue. The nightclub was open-air and it took up the entire top of the building, offering a stunning 360 degree view of the metropolis surrounding them. On one end of the rectangular space were the bank of elevators Ryuko had entered from and the entrance area, on the opposite end was a large stage in front of a high DJ booth fitted with an impressive array of sound and visual equipment. In front of that, taking up almost half the club space itself, was the dance floor. Nearer the elevator bank was a large area filled with seating of all kinds: lounge chairs, couches, bar tables. Finally, the long bar was situated just beside the seating area, framed by the tall skyscrapers of the city center in the distance. The entire club was lit with soft cool pastel-colored lighting, gracefully changing colors one minute to the next. It was all very futuristic, staff members and bar workers scattered throughout making the final preparations.

The sun was just now setting, and Ryuko was looking around for Satsuki when she noticed a tall figure framed by the rays of the setting sun, speaking to two others off to the side of the stage. Ryuko began making her way over to them, the shortest of the three nudging the tallest one as Ryuko got close. It was, in fact, her older sister Satsuki, dressed in a blue long sleeve button-down blouse tucked into a tight high-waisted leather skirt, with modest black heels. She looked stunning as usual, so stunning in fact that as she went to greet her sister she neglected to notice who the other two figures she had been talking to were.

“Well, well, if it isn't the transfer student.” Ryuko heard a nasally voice say smugly. She turned and was met face to face by none other than Nonon Jakazure, former Non-Athletic Club Chairman at Honnouji academy and Satsuki's best friend since elementary school. Standing next to her, black leather jacket zipped all the way up, was Houka Inumuta. “Greetings, Matoi.” he said curtly, using his thumb and middle finger to push his glasses higher on the bridge of his nose.

Ryuko was caught off guard, to say the least. She hadn't expected head nor tails of these two before the party actually started. “J-J-Jakazure?! Inumuta? What the hell are you guys doing here so early? Haven't you ever heard of being fashionably late?” Ryuko stammered. Nonon muttered something to the effect of “Eloquent as always...” before Satsuki intervened, explaining the situation.

“These two will be providing the music for tonight, imouto. I can vouch for their talents personally.” Satsuki said matter-of-factly. It all started to become clear to Ryuko, as she noticed the milk crate full of vinyl records under Nonon's arm, and the laptop and headphones Inumuta was carrying. Ryuko scoffed. “*You're* Japan's hottest new DJ duo?” Inumuta chuckled, looking towards the stage. “I wouldn't necessarily describe us as such, especially if the Snake here has anything to say about it.”

“Oi Dog, maybe if you pulled your head out of your ass once in a while and realized the *merits* of good vintage dance music, we'd be getting more gigs!” Nonon shot back, slamming her record-laden milk crate onto the stage and making her way towards the DJ booth. Inumuta simply chuckled once again, shaking his head and following her while waving his

hand over his head in a mock-goodbye. Ryuko watched them go until she felt a hand on her shoulder, turning to face Satsuki and finally greeting her with a short hug. “They certainly have quite the working relationship.” Satsuki said whimsically. Ryuko frowned, looking back towards the booth. “Yeah, I guess. How the hell do they ever actually play anything with those attitudes?”

Satsuki motioned for Ryuko to follow her towards the bar, answering her question as they walked. “My understanding is that their rivalry actually creates somewhat of a positive dichotomy while performing. Nonon prefers classic dance music and purely analogue equipment, and Houka sticks to more modern fare and is purely digital in his tastes. The result is...strangely pleasing, to say the least. I do not think you will be disappointed.” Ryuko scoffed again, leaning an elbow on the bar. “I better not be. This party needs to be perfect.”

They ordered their first drinks of the night, Satsuki choosing a dry gin martini and Ryuko, seeing what her sister ordered and feeling fancy, ordered a top-shelf bourbon on the rocks. Ryuko held the short glass to her lips, smelling the sweet aroma and hearing the ice cubes tinkling in the glass. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Satsuki stare blankly at the martini glass for a split second, before tilting her head back and downing the entire drink in one. Ryuko slowly lowered her drink, turning to stare at Satsuki with a face of slight bewilderment.

“Uh...everything okay, sis? That's quite a bit of sauce.” Ryuko said with a nervous laugh.

Satsuki turned to Ryuko and frowned, elegantly placing the glass back on the bar. Her large eyebrows furrowed. “Nerves.” She said simply, before walking from the bar to continue surveying the setup. Ryuko sat down at a barstool, shaking her head in amusement. Staring at her drink, she scooped it up quickly and poured its entirety down her throat in one gulp. Wincing with the shock of that much bourbon all at once, she slammed the glass down on the counter, motioning towards the bartender.

“Ey, barkeep! What else ya got?”

Satsuki leaned on the railing across from the bar, surveying her kingdom. Former students of the illustrious Honnouji academy had begun to arrive, slowly filling the club with their bustling and noise. Satsuki looked toward the stage, where Nonon and Inumuta had finished their sound check and put their set into full swing. Nonon flipped a record out of its sleeve with one hand, deftly spinning it in her clutches before gingerly placing it atop one of the

turntables, moving it ever so slightly back and forth to cue the next song. Inumuta busied himself with moving one hand across a fully touch screen DJ controller, his other typing furious on his laptop keyboard, managing not only his half of the music but also the lighting and visuals.

They were keeping it subtle for the introductory part of their set, sticking with a more downtempo background feel until later in the night when the crowd would be undoubtedly pulsing along with the music. Satsuki watched as a club staff member set a bottle of whiskey on the booth table between them, bowed, then melted back into the bustle. Nonon and Inumuta shared a steely grin as they began to hand the bottle back and forth, taking healthy swigs and returning to their work. They really were immersing themselves in the DJ lifestyle, Satsuki thought.

It was then that Satsuki heard an audible squeal of joy over the music, turning just in time to notice that Mako Mankanshoku had arrived. She was talking happily with Ryuko, the two girls doting over each other's outfits and hair. Mako quirked up, grabbing Ryuko's arm and leading her off towards the bar to order drinks that would probably be much too sweet and much to girly for Ryuko. Satsuki began to make her way through the growing crowd towards them, handing out regal words of welcome to students along the way. She made it about halfway before she notice two figures step out into the open air from the elevators, one tall and lanky, the other almost inhumanly large. Satsuki recognized them instantly as two of her best friends and one half of the elite four, Uzu Sanageyama and Ira Gamagoori.

Sanageyama and Gamagoori immediately made their way over to her, Sanageyama sporting his signature swagger and a wide grin, Gamagoori frowning and looking very out of place. Sanageyama was dressed in a grey suit, with a long broad-shouldered coat flowing around his legs as his leather snakeskin boots clacked across the floor. Gamagoori was clearly dressed to kill, in an all-black corduroy casual suit with a white button-up dress shirt open at the collar. Satsuki couldn't help but think Ira looked more the part of a bouncer at the club than a patron.

“Gentlemen, thank you for coming. I encourage you to drink your fill and toast to the honor of great Honnouji. This *is* what we worked so hard for after all.” Satsuki said regally, nodding her head elegantly at each of them. Gamagoori placed his arm across his chest in a half salute, bowing his head and saying “Of course, Satsuki-sama.” Sanageyama bowed deeply, a small grin forming on his face. “Satsuki-sama, you're looking dazzling as always. This is quite the affair! Say, where's-”

Before he could finish his sentence, Ryuko burst from the crowd, face red with drink and smile wide with mirth, yelling “Hiyooooooooooo!” She took a position near Satsuki, noticing the two new guests. Stamping one foot into an attention position, Ryuko snapped off a mock salute in greeting to the larger of the two men. “Gamagoori.” she said simply, barely containing her amusement. The joke was lost on Ira, however, the former Honnouji disciplinary chair staring down his nose at Ryuko and saying “Matoi.” curtly. She quickly turned her attention to Sanageyama after realizing her joke went over like a sinking ship.

“Eh, Sanageyama! You ready to get drunk under the table by a girl tonight?” Ryuko yelled over the thumping music, smirking. The two fist-bumped, Sanageyama responding: “Hmph, not if your drinking is as sloppy as your sword style, Matoi!” They continued talking smack

to one another, the conversation lost on Satsuki through the loud music, although at one point Ryuko began to pretend-punch at different parts of Uzu's body yelling “Men! Dou! Kote!” while Sanageyama laughed hysterically. Satsuki smiled subtly, glad that at least one of her friends was getting along with her sister. As Nonon and Inumuta's set thumped on, Satsuki was about to strike up conversation with Gamagoori when she spied a small coconut-headed girl emerge from the crowd grinning ear to ear, heading in her direction.

Mako halted directly in front of Satsuki, oblivious to her surroundings and admittedly a little tipsy. Gamagoori's face reddened significantly at the sight of her, but he said nothing for the time being. “Satsuki-sama, you look so pretty! This party is so great my tiny heart can barely even stand it, you and Ryuko-chan are such great hosts and I'm so happy and-”

“Mako.” Satsuki said, putting a hand on the smaller girl's shoulder.

She smiled, looking down into Mako's face. “Thank you, those words mean a great deal coming from Ryuko's best friend. Now-” Satsuki leaned down to whisper into Mako's ear: “-there's someone directly behind you that you might want to greet.” Eyes growing wide, Mako slowly turned around until she was faced to face with Gamagoori. “M-Mankanshoku...” Gamagoori stammered, face red as a tomato. Mako gasped, leaping into the air towards Gamagoori.

“GAMAGOORI-SENPAI!” Mako screeched, latching her arms around the huge man's neck in one of her signature hugs.

Ira looked simultaneously pleased and nervous, Ryuko and Uzu having long stopped their trash talking to watch the proceedings with Satsuki fondly. The two exchanged several pleasantries before Mako snatched one of Gamagoori's massive fingers, hauling him towards the packed dance floor. “C'mon, Senpai! Let's dance!” Ira followed, looking at Satsuki nervously, silently pleading for help. She simply smiled and made a shooing motion with her hands. They melted into the crowd, leaving the three behind to ponder the improbability of Ira ever dancing, or what that would actually look like in the first place. Sanageyama and Ryuko shared an amused glance, before wordlessly shrugging and heading towards the dance floor themselves. Satsuki began to turn back towards the bar, content to just order another martini.

Someone else had different ideas, however, as Satsuki felt a hand grip hers and pull her back towards the dance floor. She whirled around, coming face to face with Ryuko. “Come on, nee-san. Let's dance like a buncha idiots for a bit. You don't have to be the stoic leader all the time, y'know.” Fighting everything in her nature that taught her to be serious and removed from everything like this, Satsuki obliged, entering the throng of dancers packing the dance floor with Ryuko, surrendering fully to the moment and dancing, indeed, like an idiot. While

there was still a small voice in the back of her head attempting to tell her otherwise, for the first time in as long as she could remember she, Satsuki Kiryuin, here in this nightclub dancing on the same idiotic level as all of her former underlings around her, was really, truly happy.

Revelry Pt. 2

Chapter Notes

> Part two and the last half of the party arc! This chapter will take you on a bit of a feel trip at times, but it's a good feel trip for sure. I hope you guys are enjoying this as much as me, I am having so much fun writing this. Definitely expect much more to come soon, I have a ton of ideas floating around. Thanks, and enjoy!

Nonon placed her headphones around her neck as she turned her gaze upward and surveyed the scene in front of her. The dance floor was now more crowded than it had been all night, filled with a throng of former Honnouji academy students come to drink, dance and converse. She sneered, relishing the kind of control that only music could give over these people. She held the fate of their enjoyment in the palm of her hand, and Nonon remarked at how similar being a DJ was to conducting an orchestra in that respect. She glanced at Inumuta, her DJ partner in this night of revelry, and took a massive swig from the bottle of whiskey the attendant had left them, cringing at the burning sensation as it went down.

“Finally starting to party, are we little miss Nonon?” Houka said, catching her gaze and smirking before zipping his turtle-collared jacket back up.

Nonon stuck her tongue out, making a vulgar gesture. “You haven't the faintest idea, Dog. I'm about to bring out the big guns...” She said, trailing off as she dug around in her milk crate for a particular record. She was finally starting to feel the effects of the whiskey, making her normally-precise and dextrous hands slightly heavy and uncoordinated. She finally found what she was looking for, however, and she tapped Inumuta on the shoulder, showing him what she had selected.

“Ah, I see now...you *are* bringing out the big guns. I shall give you a suitable lead-in, then.” Houka said as they shared hardy grins.

Nonon was holding her original 1997 first pressing of Daft Punk's first album, *Homework*. It was, as anyone even remotely knowledgeable about dance music would know, an absolute classic, filled with some of the best classic dance music anyone could ever want to hear at a party such as this. As deftly as her semi-drunken hands would tolerate, Nonon slipped the record out of its sleeve and gingerly placed it atop one of her turntables, placing the needle at

the beginning of a set of grooves about halfway down. “Around the World...” she thought. “Perfect.” She then crooked one cup of her headphones between her shoulder and her ear, the other listening to and internalizing the tempo of the track Houka was playing at the moment. Then, eager to begin playing her track, she moved the record into a suitable cue position and fiddled with the turntable's speed slider, matching the tempo of the current track perfectly. Then, signaling to Houka that she was ready, they slowly faded the current track out and *Around the World* in, heads bobbing in unison.

The bassline hit, and a roar of approval went up from the crowd as more and more people were drawn to the dancefloor by such a popular song. Nonon smiled to herself, pleased, and took another swig from the bottle before pushing it into Inumuta's hands to finish off. She then turned back to her milk crate, rifling through more records proactively.

“It looks like your efforts have paid off. There are some recognizable figures joining the fray!” Houka yelled to her over the pumping music.

She turned and stared into the crowd, towards where Houka had indicated. Indeed, five recognizable figures had made their way onto the dancefloor: the underachiever, the transfer student, the toad, the northern kanto monkey and...Satsuki-chan? Nonon was surprised. “Is that Satsuki-ch-, I mean Satsuki-sama?” she stammered.

“Indeed, it looks like your choice of song has brought even the most unlikely dancers out tonight. After Gamagoori, of course.”

Nonon continued to stare. Satsuki should have seemed so out of place on a dancefloor, and yet she was so elegant and graceful even when dancing on the same level as all these people that she didn't seem out of place at all. Nonon chalked it up to yet another example of her enormous amount of willpower. She crossed her arms and smiled an uncharacteristically genuine smile, zoning out for a bit. Inumuta's voice brought her back into focus:

“The crowd seems pleased, princess. I take it we must be doing a good job then?”

Nonon smiled evilly back at him, baring her teeth. “Just you wait, Dog.” she said, turning to rifle through her collection once more. “These people haven't seen anything yet. We're going to tear this fucking place down by the end of the night.”

Houka Inumuta simply quirked an eyebrow and began preparing his next track.

They danced furiously for several songs, the group finally retiring to a corner of the nightclub's seating area to regroup. Ryuko was on her way to the bar, having offered to get more drinks, when she noticed yet another familiar face had arrived at the party. Standing in front of the bar, talking to Inumuta while his long blonde hair moved slightly with the cool night's breeze, was Shirou Iori, former sewing club president and student council member at Honnouji academy. Ryuko arrived next to them at the bar, the pair of men nodding curtly in greeting at her in unison. “Matoi.”, they said once again in unison, and Ryuko in her semi-drunken stupor gave them a blank stare before bursting into a hearty belly laugh, the two men sharing a confused glance.

“Something is amusing to you, Matoi?” Iori said, brows furrowing. Inumuta cocked an eyebrow.

“You guys are two peas in a pod, aren't ya?! Anyways, why aren't you up there doing your job, Dog?” Ryuko asked.

Inumuta snorted and directed their attention to the DJ booth: “I think the Snake has it covered thoroughly for the moment.” Nonon had moved on to playing an assortment of Scandinavian nu-disco, drunkenly bobbing her head, the dancefloor writhing beneath her. “She certainly seems to be within her element.” Iori commented, smirking. “Yeah well, if she keeps drinking like that we're gonna need an ambulance. Barkeep!” Ryuko yelled over the din, waving to the bartender and turning away from Houka and Shirou as they returned to their conversation.

She returned to the group with a large tray of assorted drinks, setting it gingerly down on the table in the middle of their seating area, before excusing herself to return to the bar and refresh her own drink. Ryuko made it all of ten feet before literally running headfirst into two of the last people she wanted to run into. One was short and muscular, with a shaved head that was altogether too large for his frame. The other, a tall, lanky blonde-haired woman with a fierce, unforgiving face. She frowned, recognizing them instantly: Takaharu Fukuroda and Omiko Hakodate. Boxing and tennis club presidents. Fight one and fight two. “Shit.” Ryuko uttered, clenching her fists.

“Ah, Matoi! Just the woman we were looking for.” Fukuroda said, looking to Hakodate. She smiled, sharp teeth glinting in the ambient light. Ryuko tensed. “We wanted to thank you.” Hakodate said, before the pair of them bowed deeply. Ryuko's fists went limp, her mouth agape with confusion.

“Th-thank me? But I...I beat you guys to a pulp!” She said, slack-jawed.

“Indeed. You beat both of us so badly, in fact, that it became the defining moment of our careers. A real make-or-break kind of thing.” Fukuroda said, smiling a toothy grin. Hakodate nodded in agreement. “Yes, nothing quite motivates you like getting stripped naked in front of hundreds of spectators...” she said, grimacing. “Anyways, we've both gone professional! I'm rising in the ranks of the Japan Pro Boxing Association, and Hakodate here's set to play in her first US open later this year.” Fukuroda boasted, placing his fists on his hips in a wide stance.

Ryuko's face split into a wide grin, laughing heartily. “Wow, this is a first! Someone's finally thanking me for beating them in a fight. I could get used to this!”

Hakodate's face darkened. “Don't push it Matoi. I won't hesitate to give you my 110 million cannonball serve again if you step out of line.”

Ryuko's laughing intensified, throwing her head back and placing her fists on her hips. She snatched two flutes of champagne from a passing attendant's tray, shoving them into Hakodate and Fukuroda's clutches. “Aw, cool it tennis-chan. You guys need to lighten up a bit. Get drunk and party, that's what we're all here for right?” She then took her leave of them, marching in the direction of the bar, her original destination. The two former two-stars shared a weary look, before clinking their flutes together and downing the champagne in one gulp. “That Matoi really is something else...” Fukuroda said, staring off into the distance at nothing in particular. “Yeah, whatever. At least we got that over with. Let's go.” Hakodate shot back, grabbing Fukuroda's arm and dragging him towards the dance floor.

Mako Mankanshoku leaned on the railing at the edge of the nightclub, peering over the edge at the bustling lit-up city below. Her face glowed, ecstatic beyond all reason to be here tonight surrounded by all of her friends and former classmates. Her heart was bursting seeing

everyone finally getting along, especially after witnessing the sisterly teamwork of Ryuko-chan and Satsuki-sama in throwing this whole thing. Deep in joyous thought, Mako at first didn't notice the slender blond-haired woman leaning her back onto the railing next to her, staring at the sky and nursing a fancy mixed drink. Mako turned to greet this new arrival with glee when she finally realized who it was: Omiko Hakodate, her former superior in the Honnouji academy tennis club.

“Hakodate-senpai! You're here?” Mako said, eyes wide.

“Ah. Hello, Mankanshoku. Yes, Fukuroda invited me against my better wishes.” She responded, eyes falling to her drink.

“Oh, okay. Is everything alright, senpai? You don't seem like you're having much fun...” Mako implored, worry painted on her face.

Hakodate sighed again. “I must confess I usually don't come to these kinds of things. I don't really have any friends to speak of. Probably something to do with my personality. But...you wouldn't know anything about that, a girl like you probably has plenty of friends.”

Mako came to stand in front of Omiko, staring up into her face intently. “It's true, I have a lot of friends now! But...before I met Ryuko-chan, the only people that would talk to me were the ones I made up in my head. I probably know a lot more about it than you think!” Mako smiled warmly, winking.

Hakodate welled up inside, not understanding why this girl that her and her compatriots had wronged so much would even speak to her. “M-Mankanshoku, I'm...I'm sorry for everything I did to you back at the academy. The berating, the punishment...not a day goes by that I don't regret it, especially after seeing how much you helped Satsuki-sama in the end.” She stared at her feet. “I'd imagine the reason I have no friends is obvious by now...”

Mako just smiled wide, making a waving-off gesture. “Oh, that stuff? It's okay, senpai! You were just doing your job! We Mankanshokus are made of tough stuff, so don't worry. You helped us out in the end anyways, so I don't see a problem!” Mako said, giggling.

“Y-you really think that?” Hakodate asked incredulously.

“Of course! Senpai, if you need a friend, I'll be one for you just like I am for Ryuko-chan and everyone else. Everyone deserves a friend, it's what makes the world go round!” Mako leapt at Hakodate, enveloping her in a tight hug, startling the taller girl at first before she relaxed and reciprocated.

“Mankanshoku...thank you. You truly are a good person. I'm not worthy of your friendship, but I will accept it gladly.” She smiled sadly, relieved.

“I'm happy you're happy.” Mako said cheerfully, breaking away from the hug and grabbing Omiko's hand, staring into her eyes once more. “And senpai? You can just call me Mako.”

The party had been going swimmingly for almost two and a half hours now, the nightclub now fully packed with several hundred of Honnouji academy's former students, student leadership and even some former members of Nudist Beach. Some danced, Inumuta having returned to his perch alongside Nonon to provide yet more musical entertainment. Some sat catching up on the past year in the seating area, other choosing to mingle around the railings at the building's edge or the bar. Ryuko and Satsuki had been individually making their rounds around the nightclub, welcoming everyone they could, mingling, dancing, drinking and chatting. Ryuko was taken aback at the amount of people that had sought her out and thanked her personally for saving the world from the menace of life fibers, usually responding with a stammer or a short “Uh, yeah no problem I guess.” She wasn't used to such frequent praise and it was admittedly throwing her off her game a little bit.

Grabbing a bottle of water from behind the bar, she waved thanks to the bartender (whom she had developed a report with so far, having ordered a substantial amount of drinks) and set off in search of Satsuki, whom she hadn't seen much since they had finished dancing about an hour ago. She soon spotted her tall, regal form across the nightclub speaking casually to Sanageyama, tucking an errant strand of hair behind her ear. Ryuko made her way over to the two, catching the last half of Sanageyama's sentence before they noticed her. “...just glad you two seem like actual sisters now. Ryuko and Mako really are good people to have around-” Sanageyama broke off instantly, noticing Ryuko approaching. He looked genuinely embarrassed to be caught saying something so genuine and not just covering himself by talking smack.

“Ah, Ryu-uh, I mean M-Matoi. I was just uh...about to use the bathroom!” He said as he pressed his hands together in a defeated gesture, dashing away. Ryuko smirked, cocking an eyebrow towards Satsuki. “You guys talking about me behind my back?” she said.

Satsuki snorted in amusement, mostly at Sanageyama's reaction. “Hardly. Uzu was simply remarking on our relationship as sisters. It seems we've become somewhat close this last month.” Ryuko had to agree. Satsuki finally being home after such a long time away had definitely made her happy to have a sister once again. Ryuko smiled and looked up at Satsuki, winking. “Yeah, I guess I've just learned to live with you. Even though you have a huge stick up your ass sometimes.” Satsuki surprised Ryuko by flashing a fierce smile, then leaning closer to her in order to speak with a soft intensity. “Not as much as you might think, *Ryuko Matoi*.” Ryuko could smell a significant amount of alcohol on her breath. She was impressed.

Ryuko gave a hearty laugh. “I'll admit it nee-san, I'm impressed! Still feeling those nerves?” Ryuko said, cocking an eyebrow. Satsuki put her hands on her hips, shifting her weight. “Not at all. I have ingested a sufficient amount of alcohol to be pleasantly inebriated. Perhaps we shall have a drinking contest later, where I can once again prove that I am the superior Kiryuin.” Satsuki then surprised Ryuko further by reaching down and tousling her hair playfully. Ryuko had to admit, Satsuki was really coming out of her shell. She was proud. Satsuki straightened herself up and took a deep breath. “Come, imouto. Let us address our guests.”

“Right.” Ryuko said, following her big sister's lead.

The pair made their way towards the large elevated stage at one end of the club. Circumventing the shoulder-to-shoulder crowd in front of the stage, the sister climbed the side stairs onto the raised surface in front of where Inumuta and Jakazure were DJing. Ryuko saw Satsuki greet the both of them, Nonon drunkenly waving before Satsuki said to the two: “It's time.” She retrieved a live microphone while Nonon slowly ramped down the music and Inumuta began changing the lighting assembly. The music dropped off noticeably, everyone turning to see what had prompted the change of pace.

With a significant *ka-chunk,* light flooded over the assembled crowd. On one side of the stage, where Satsuki was positioned, it was a bright yellowish white. Nothing out of the ordinary, thought Ryuko, until she looked at the lights behind her on the opposite side of the stage and grinned ear to ear. They were a bright, almost deafeningly red, the same color as the streak in her hair. She leaned back to Inumuta with a smirk, saying “Nice touch.” The attention of the entire club having been sufficiently commanded, Satsuki Kiryuin, former student council president of Honnouji academy, stepped forward purposefully, slamming her foot down making a single sound rang out across the nightclub.

CLACK.

“Graduates of Honnouji academy! I, Satsuki Kiryuin, along with my sister Ryuko Matoi, welcome you to the Honnouji academy one year reunion!” A massive roar went up from the crowd, only stopping when Satsuki held up a hand for silence. “I invite you tonight to celebrate like you have never celebrated before, for tonight we toast to our glorious victory over tyranny and injustice! All of you drink your fill, raise your glass and toast to the memory of those who have fallen so that we may all be here today.” Satsuki raised her glass, Ryuko and everyone else following suit. “To the fallen! To you, and to us! To the glory of Honnouji academy!” A thunderous roar erupted from the assembled guests, downing their drinks and chanting Satsuki and Ryuko's names. “If you would please, my sister would like to address you all as well.”

Satsuki threw the microphone to Ryuko, the crowd silencing themselves almost immediately. Ryuko stared at the mike in her hands thoughtfully for a second, before holding it up to speak. “Y'know, around a year ago most of you guys were my sworn enemies. And now, here we are one year later getting drunk and partying like best friends. That's pretty damn incomprehensible.” Ryuko turned her gaze toward the sky, continuing. “I said it one year ago and I'll say it again, incomprehensible's our thing! Never forget that! Now, enough talk. It's time to get drunk and party!” The crowd went wild, and as the music slowly faded back up and the lighting returned to normal, the sisters exited the stage pleased with themselves. Ryuko clapped a hand on Satsuki's back as they headed for the bar. “That was awesome, nee-san. Looks like this little get-together's a hit!” Ryuko said, beaming. Satsuki returned her smile. “Yes, it looks as if all our hard work payed off. Congratulations., Ryuko.” They ordered themselves two more drinks, content to just sip them silently and revel in their success for a while.

“That was some speech up there, you two.” That voice...Ryuko knew that voice. Her and Satsuki turned around at once, facing down the owner of that voice. Satsuki had already risen, and spoke before Ryuko could even open her mouth. “Mikisugi-san, it is good to see you as always. Thank you for coming.” She bowed, rising just as another familiar face stepped from behind their former teacher. He sported short black hair with a bright red mohawk, almost identical in color to Ryuko's red streak. “Ah, Kinagase. I'm glad you could make it as well.”

Ryuko stared, surprised by their sheer presence: Aikuro Mikisugi, leader of Nudist Beach and Ryuko's former homeroom teacher, and Tsumugu Kinagase, Nudist Beach commando and

anti-life fiber guerilla. Both of them were wearing suave all-black three piece suits, with white dress shirts and black ties.“Well, if it isn't nipples and hentai club. I'm surprised to see either of you here. Especially you, hentai club.” Ryuko said, crossing her arms. She was feeling quite drunk now, and was unintimidated by trash-talking a former senior and someone who had once wanted Senketsu killed.

“Hello Satsuki-sama, Ryuko-kun. It's good to see you again.” Mikisugi said, smiling warmly and clearly ignoring Ryuko's jibes. Lighting a cigarette, Tsumugu took a step towards Ryuko. “Let me tell you two useful pieces of information.” He said, flicking his lighter out and taking a long drag. “First: I would normally never be caught dead in a place like this. Second: *he* made me come.” he said, gesturing at Mikisugi. Ryuko stared him down, defiant. “In truth, it was Satsuki-sama who invited us. We've been so busy working that we haven't had much time for leisure, so it's nice to unwind a bit.” Mikisugi said, placating Tsumugu. Satsuki's interest was piqued. “Work? What are you two so busy doing, if I might ask?”

Mikisugi glanced at Tsumugu, who nodded. “We've been hard at work decommissioning Nudist Beach's worldwide assets, as well as setting up anti-life fiber task forces on every inhabited continent. In case the life fibers ever decide to return, and to eliminate the possibility of something like what happened a year ago ever happening again.” Mikisugi explained. Satsuki nodded her head in approval, adding “If you ever require any assistance in your tasks, I will put the full weight of the new REVOCS corporation behind you.” Mikisugi bowed, thanking her.

“Yeah, yeah, let's keep work at work, huh? You're here, you might as well start drinking. Hey, Takahashi!” Ryuko yelled to the bartender using his family name, gesturing drunkenly at the two men. “These two pervert-looking dudes down here need drinks!” She then finished the rest of her gin and tonic with one gulp, and sped off to join Mako and the others, once again dancing furiously on the packed dance floor. Satsuki and Mikisugi watched her go, both smiling fondly. “That girl. That girl is-”

“-incomprehensible. I know. We've bonded quite a bit over the past month since I've been home. It has been...quite pleasant, surprisingly.” Satsuki finished for Mikisugi. “I have to admit when you two first squared off I thought it was going to be up to Tsumugu and I to finish you both. I never could have imagined an outcome like this. It's better than anything we could have hoped for.” Mikisugi observed. Satsuki nodded in agreement. “It certainly is somewhat of a happy ending, Mikisugi-san. Thank you again for all your help.” Satsuki raised her glass to Mikisugi. They clinked glasses, before Satsuki said “To Isshin Matoi.” “To Soichiro Kiryuin.” Mikisugi returned, before both of them took a drink. Satsuki smiled up at him. “If you'll excuse me, I'm going to join my sister and my friends. Thank you for coming.” Satsuki said. “It's my pleasure, Satsuki-sama.” Mikisugi returned, bowing low one last time.

As Satsuki strode off to join the throng of dancing students, Mikisugi and Tsumugu, war-weary and feeling much to old, sat idly at the bar nursing their drinks.

When it was all said and done, the party had been a smashing success. A fittingly epic reunion for such an astounding group of people. Ryuko couldn't have been more pleased with the results. It was late now, the music having stopped almost an hour ago. All the guests had taken their leave, save for a select group of friends which consisted of the elite four, Iori, Mikisugi, Tsumugu, Mako, Satsuki and Ryuko herself. They had been talking amongst themselves for some time now, chatting about this and that. Ryuko was talking to Mako and had heard a drunken Nonon screech out a signature “NANI SORE!?” at Sanageyama for some reason or another, after which Satsuki got all of their attention.

“Friends. Thank you for being here tonight. This was a very special anniversary for all of us, and I know I speak for both myself and Ryuko when I say that it means the world to us. I would like to propose one last toast.” She said, raising her glass. “To friends, without which neither I nor Ryuko would be here today. To friends loyal, past present and future. Cherish them and hold them tight, for they are our lifeblood and our reason for living. To you, the elite four, Iori, Mikisugi-san, Kinagase, Mako and Ryuko. And finally...to those no longer with us. To Isshin Matoi, to Soichiro Kiryuin, to Kinue Kinagase, and to Senketsu. They will be missed, and celebrated.”

Satsuki bowed her head out of respect, before they all slowly took a drink. All except Ryuko, who had put a hand over her heart and was staring up into the night sky. “I hope you're up there, Senketsu. You too, Dad. This was all for you...” Ryuko's thought trailed off as she slumped into one of the comfortable couches in the seating area. Ryuko watched the remainder of the party dwindle around her, the rest of the night seeming like a time lapse where everyone was moving quickly around her and she was completely still. Her eyes slipped closed, comfortable beyond reason in her surroundings. The last thing Ryuko felt before completely surrendering to deep, drunken sleep was a small body plopping down on the couch next to her, and leaning it's head on her shoulder.

Aftershocks

Chapter Notes

> Sorry it's been a while! This chapter is mostly set-up for some important stuff in the next chapter, so sorry if it's kinda boring. Although this is a slice of life fanfic so everything could probably be considered kinda boring. Anyways, more soon. Enjoy!

The cool morning breeze blew lazily against Ryuko's face. It was peaceful, and the only sound was the incessant ringing in her ears. Her head pounded, and her whole body felt shaky as she very slowly felt herself re-enter the land of the living. Without opening her eyes, Ryuko explored her surroundings. She was obviously still where she ended up last night, on the comfortable couch at the nightclub where she had danced and drank way too much. She was covered with a long, black coat (probably Satsuki's) and was comfortably warm. Retrieving her phone from her lap, Ryuko held it to her face, finally opening her eyes. It was overcast, still somewhat early in the morning and the club was deserted save for a small amount of staff finishing cleaning the place up. Ryuko squinted her tired eyes at her phone, noticing she had one new text message. She opened it, squinting her eyes further. It was from Satsuki.

“Ryuko. We've all gone to Kiryuin manor to decompress for the rest of the weekend. I apologize for not waking you but you and Nonon looked comfortable. Please join us at your leisure.”

Ryuko smiled, as excitedly as she could under the circumstances. Kiryuin manor was about an hour north of Tokyo by car, and that would mean she'd have another opportunity to drive her Ferrari on country backroads. Satsuki had said something about Nonon too, but Ryuko brushed it off, closing her eyes. That is, until she felt something small shift against her. She slowly opened her eyes again, realizing her arm was around a small pair of shoulders to her left, a pink-haired head nuzzled into her shoulder. Ryuko's eyes grew wide, followed by her eyebrows furrowing.

“Ugh, great.” Ryuko said, slowly lifting her arm from around Nonon so as to not wake her.

She slowly rose off the couch, moving Nonon's head so that it was leaning back against the couch instead of her shoulder. Wondering what the hell had happened last night, Ryuko made

her way over to the bar where Takahashi the bartender was finishing up his cleaning duties. She swiped two cold bottles of water from the cooler behind the bar, all of the ice melted at this point and replaced by a bath of cool water. She waved to the friendly barkeep, who smirked and waved back at her as she returned to the couch, taking a swig from one of the bottles. Ryuko's head was absolutely killing her, her entire body dehydrated from the massive amount of alcohol she had ingested the night before. She was now paying the price for all that enjoyment, as was Nonon undoubtedly. The tiny girl had drank even more than Ryuko, astoundingly. It was a miracle she was even still alive.

Ryuko held one of the cold water bottles to Nonon's cheek. “Eh, Troll. Wake up.” She said. Nonon's eyes fluttered and she groaned loudly, turning away from Ryuko and drawing the long coat over her head. Ryuko rolled her eyes. “Hey, little miss sunshine. Seriously, it's almost-” She checked her phone. “-eight in the morning and we're still at the club. Everyone's gone to Satsuki's place, we gotta get out of here and go meet them.” Nonon did nothing but grunt, remaining in her position facing away from Ryuko. Ryuko sighed, preparing to take drastic measures to wake the small girl from her slumber. Doing her best Satsuki impression, Ryuko cried “JAKAZURE!” and reared back, punching Nonon's arm. The small, pink-haired girl nearly jumped completely into the air, throwing her head back in anger yelling “What the FUCK?!”

She landed back on the couch, back ramrod straight and fury burning in her eyes. Ryuko might've even been somewhat intimidated, if she wasn't rolling around on her side of the couch, cackling hysterically. Nonon regained some control, now fully awake. She burned a hole in Ryuko with her gaze.

“You're going to pay for that, transfer student...” she said, Ryuko now recovered fully from her fit, smirking and staring back at Nonon.

“Whatever, Snake. Did you have a good night's sleep last night? I hope so, considering you were using me as a pillow, you asshole.” Ryuko said mockingly.

Nonon's eyes narrowed at Ryuko, trying to understand what the transfer student was on about. “What the hell do you-” She paused mid-sentence as the memories came flooding back to her. She had drunkenly fallen asleep leaning on Ryuko last night, and that awkward pose had slowly morphed into a very uncharacteristic cuddle as the night had gone on. Uncharacteristic at least for these two particular women, who had always been significantly at odds with each other. Nonon's face reddened noticeably as she came to this realization. “Transfer student...I don't think I need to tell you what I'll do to you if this gets out to anyone else. Not. A. Fucking. Word.” Nonon said through gritted teeth. Ryuko got up off the couch and leaned in towards Nonon, the smaller girl's face reddening even more with surprise. “Don't worry your pretty little head about it, princess. Your secret's safe with me. Now quit being a little baby and let's go.” Ryuko said with another smirk, lightly slapping Nonon's cheek a few times before retrieving Satsuki's coat and heading towards the elevators.

“Transfer student!” Ryuko stopped walking and whipped around, staring at Nonon. “What?”

“I refuse to show myself in front of Satsuki-sama and the others without a shower and a change of clothes. I demand it, in fact.” Nonon said, upturning her nose.

Ryuko sighed. “Fine, we'll swing by my place before we head to the manor. I'm sure some of Mako's clothes will fit you. Now come on, we don't wanna keep them all waiting, princess.”

Ryuko walked off towards the elevators briskly, smirking. Nonon clenched her fists. “Don't call me that...” She said through gritted teeth, before storming off to the elevators in pursuit of Ryuko.

The wind whipped through the girls' hair as they sped throughout the Japanese countryside. The day had morphed into another beautiful one, clouds absent from the sky and the sun shining down on both of their faces, warming them. Ryuko downshifted as they entered a tight curve, throwing the car around it with ease and sending them rocketing out the other side with a growl of the engine and a press of her foot. This was pure bliss, the air cool and pleasing and the green countryside dotted with forests and rice paddies flashing by their open windows. Ryuko had exited the highway fifteen minutes ago, only about twenty minutes remaining until they arrived at the idyllic property that housed Kiryuin manor. Relaxing her driving a bit as they headed into a long straight, Ryuko glanced over at Nonon.

She was purposefully looking away from Ryuko, out the passenger window watching the countryside roll by. Her legs and feet were tucked under one side of her, her arm resting on the window jamb with her chin resting on top of that. The wind flapped through what parts of her bright pink hair weren't tied down in a tight bun. She wore an older red and white Soviet national team track jacket that Ryuko let her borrow, as well as an old pair of jeans that were too small for Mako anymore and a random t-shirt. She had fussed the whole time, clearly unsatisfied with the caliber of clothing on offer at the Matoi/Mankanshoku household. “Well, princess. You can either wear these, which are clean, or wear your dress from last night which smells like booze and cigarettes. Your choice.” Ryuko had said, throwing the clothes to Nonon. The choice was made easily.

“So, little miss Snake.” Ryuko said, trying to start idle conversation.

Nonon whipped her head around at Ryuko, scowling. “I have a name, transfer student. A *real* name.”

Ryuko's eyebrows furrowed momentarily before responding. “Right, sorry, *Nonon*. I have a real name too, y'know. Or have you forgotten it despite my sister yelling it so many times back at the academy?”

Nonon huffed. “Fine, whatever, Mat-...Ryuko.” Her scowl grew in intensity.

Ryuko laughed heartily. “See, we're finally starting to bond, *Nonon*!” Ryuko exclaimed, placing heavy emphasis on saying Jakazure's name. “Your little cuddle-fest is starting to make sense now.”

Nonon stared furiously at Ryuko. “Listen, you lowlife. I don't want you getting the wrong idea about that whole business last night. You were the closest thing I had to a pillow and, in my drunken state, I decided to use you for my purposes. Nothing more. And let's not forget it was *you* who put your arm around *me*!”

Ryuko snorted in amusement. “Whatever you gotta tell yourself to get through the day, Jakazure. Just remember that the next time we cuddle, you had better buy me dinner first.”

Nonon's face reddened and she turned away, fuming. Ryuko had to admit there was something genuinely pleasing about knowing she had something to make Nonon uncomfortable. Nonon was the kind of girl that liked to be in control of as much around her that she could be, so introducing an element like this into their interactions was sure to yield more amusement for Ryuko.

They continued in silence through the countryside until they arrived at the drive for Kiryuin manor, situated on a remote backroad in the middle of the picturesque foothills. Ryuko shifted the car into first and slowly crept along the long drive, down an open green hill towards the manor. The mansion was visible now from their perch slowly descending the hill, the house itself situated about a half-mile away on the shores of a small lake. The entire scene was surrounded by rolling hillsides that served to create a natural basin at the edges of the property. The drive leading up the manor was lined with cherry blossom trees, a touch that was meant to add something quintessentially Japanese to the altogether western presentation of the whole scene. Nonon had visited here hundreds of times over the years, but Ryuko had

only had the chance to visit once or twice before her sister had left, and even then she had not gotten the chance to take in the scene like she was now. It was breathtaking.

Ryuko swung the car around one half of the large circle drive, behind the vehicles of everyone else at the house. As soon as the car was at a complete stop, Nonon swung her door open and dashed off towards the house, slamming the door behind her. Ryuko wondered if the semi-flirtatious way she was talking to Nonon had contributed to her sour mood, staring after the petite girl as she swung one of the manor's large front doors open, striding inside. Ryuko killed the engine, pondering her next move. Nonon was one of Satsuki's oldest friends, and the need for Ryuko and her to get along was clear. If they were going to be sisters, Ryuko would be damned if she was going to be fighting one of Satsuki's friends every step of the way. Ryuko's resolve would not falter in this matter. By day's end, she would bring Nonon out of her shell one way or the other.

Ryuko swung her own door open, stepping out onto the gravel drive. She popped the door closed and locked it, striding lazily over to the other vehicles parked in front of hers. It was amazing how easily she could spot which vehicle belong to which person, based on their personality. There was, of course, Satsuki's black Mercedes-Benz, immaculate and resolute as always. Next to that was something of a completely different sort: a large, dull metallic green muscle car of American make. Circling the vehicle, Ryuko saw it was a third-generation Dodge Charger, manufactured in the early seventies. The car was spotless, including the all-black leather interior, making it abundantly clear that this was Ira Gamagoori's vehicle of choice. How fitting, Ryuko thought. Something loud and authoritative, commanding attention from all who beheld it. Ryuko was impressed.

Parked behind the Charger was a slightly smaller car of Japanese make, a newer-model dark blue Subaru Impreza STI hatchback. Like Gamagoori's big-block muscle car, it was not lacking for power, but it was clearly loaded down with as much tech as you could fit in a vehicle. Viewscreens, a nav unit, the best sound system money could buy...this was clearly the vehicle driven by Houka Inumuta. It was sleek, pragmatic and useful. Just like him. Finally, Ryuko saw what was parked next to the Subaru and let out an audible sound of jealousy.

“Woah...” She said, making her way over to the final vehicle in the drive.

It was a classic; a brand new jet black Triumph Bonneville T100 motorcycle. Ryuko's original predilection for motorcycles meant she would probably be talking at length later with the owner of this vehicle about the specifics, the classic design and modern construction appealing highly to her fancies. This could only be Uzu Sanageyama's bike, Ryuko thought. Only he would travel using something so dangerous and obvious. She smirked, twisting the grip on the right side of the handlebars pleasingly before making her way to the doors of the manor. Not content with lowering herself to Nonon's level by just barging in, Ryuko rang the doorbell and waited, the chimes echoing melodically throughout the space on the other side of the door. Before long, the door swung open and a familiar face greeted her.

“Ryuko-sama, how good it is to see you again. You are the last to arrive, please come inside. This is just as much your home, now that you are a Kiryuin.” Mitsuzo Soroi said, the friendly old man oozing the kind of dignity and tact that only a longtime butler of the Kiryuin family could.

“Hi, Soroi. It's good to see you too, thanks.” Ryuko said politely, smiling and bowing her head before entering the cavernous foyer.

The entryway was every bit as glamorous as Ryuko remembered it, a large double staircase the centerpiece of the huge room, one stairway on each side curving up towards the second floor. Directly in front of her was the entryway between the two staircases that led into the large but comfortable living room and, beyond that, the numerous sets of french doors leading out onto the sprawling land to the rear of the estate, complete with a large swimming pool directly behind the house. Ryuko slipped off her sneakers and handed them, along with her signature jacket and scarf, to Soroi. He bowed to her deeply, and she thanked him with a smile before she made her way into the living room.

As she entered the large space that took up the back half of the first floor, Ryuko moved her head side to side, taking in the scene. Far to her right was a large open kitchen area, with an island separating it from the rest of the space. Next to that was a huge, ornate dining table with space for no less than 12 chairs, it's onyx surface polished to a dull sheen and maintained flawlessly. On the opposite side of the room from the kitchen and dining area was the sitting space, complete with several high-class couches and chairs, a marble coffee table and possibly the biggest TV Ryuko had ever seen taking up most of the far wall. Several inset bookcases and decorative shelves dotted the room, adding to the air of sophistication and comfort. Finally, in the dead center of the entire area, was a large black grand piano, its top closed and the keys covered. Ryuko looked back over to the kitchen area where Nonon was brewing a cup of coffee, her back turned to Ryuko. She briefly contemplated messing with her again, before deciding against it. She had probably had enough on the drive over, and Ryuko was trying to build an actual friendship, not tear it down.

She instead made her way to the array of couches and chairs. She noticed several familiar figures sitting on different pieces of furniture in the area: Gamagoori and Mako shared a snug

love seat to one side, Gamagoori nodding quietly at her entrance as Ryuko noticed Mako was fast asleep against one of Ira's massive arms. On a large, long couch in front of the huge television sat Uzu Sanageyama and Shiro Iori, both holding controllers and tapping at them animatedly. They were, somewhat predictably, playing Street Fighter, and Iori was winning based on Sanageyama's several curses and grunts. Gamagoori shushed them angrily, pointing to Mako asleep next to him. Finally, in a chair opposite from Gamagoori and Mako, sat Houka Inumuta, busying himself as always tapping away at his laptop. He looked up long enough to nod at Ryuko in greeting, before returning to his work.

Ryuko plopped down on the couch between Iori and Sanageyama, the latter having just lost the fight and dropped the controller in his lap, arms crossed. Ryuko was about to enter the game herself, when she noticed the conspicuous absence of her sister. She hadn't seen her when she came in, so she must have been elsewhere.

“Hey, where's my sister at?” Ryuko asked, looking around. Inumuta raised his head once again from his work.

“Satsuki-sama mentioned something about taking a shower when we arrived here earlier. She hasn't been back down since, so I assume she's still in her room.” He said flatly, straightening his glasses.

“Hm, maybe I should go check on her...I'll be back, guys.” Ryuko said, jumping off the couch and heading back towards the entryway to climb the stairs to the second story, noticing the sidelong look she got from Nonon as she was leaving the room.

Ryuko took the stairs two at a time, arriving at Satsuki's door after only a few large paces. She knocked timidly, feeling admittedly a bit strange knocking at her sister's door like they were two schoolgirls. After a short while and no answer, Ryuko took a deep breath and slowly opened the door, slipping inside the large bedroom. The room was of course very like Satsuki; simple, elegant and regal. There was a large king-sized four poster bed on one side of the room, opposite a wide mahogany desk and monstrous dresser. Ryuko stumbled about the room for a while, savoring this chance to be within a place so few had seen, the inner sanctum of a fearless leader. She noticed a small picture frame sitting on the far side of the desk, and Ryuko, picking it up, smiled warmly with recognition.

The picture was of Ryuko, Mako and Satsuki on the date they had taken shortly after the end of the events of Honnouji academy. Memories flooded back into her mind as she remembered that warm day traveling around Tokyo, shopping, eating and enjoying her time with her sister and best friend. Ryuko placed the picture back on the desk, glancing at the wall above Satsuki's bed absentmindedly. She gasped when the realization of what hung there washed over her like a tidal wave. Two blades, one short like a dagger, the other longer and more

swordlike, hung on pegs ornately above the head of her sister's bed. The blades were both onyx-black, and more resilient than anything Ryuko knew of, save for her scissor blade. They were the fragments of what once was the secret sword Bakuzan, now separated into the Gako and Kouryu. Satsuki must have had them repaired after Ragyo broke them during the final battle. Just one more thing that bitch destroyed, Ryuko thought darkly.

She moved to the edge of the bed, kneeling on the edge and shuffling on her knees over to the wall under the two blades. She then carefully reached up and plucked the closer of the two off the wall, the smaller Bakuzan Gako. Ryuko slid into a sitting position on the edge of the bed, holding the small blade in her open palms. She shifted the handle into her dominant hand, reverse-gripped, and swung it back and forth a few times. It was surprisingly light, she noticed as she twirled the blade in several flourishes daringly in an out of her deft fingers. It was also, not at all to her surprise, immaculately clean and without a scratch. Ironic, considering all this blade had been through. She stared down at her own reflection in the black blade, thinking about how many people trembled, how many empires fell and enemies were vanquished using only this blade and its other half. Ryuko resolved not to delve to much into those thoughts, as Ryuko knew the dark roads her sister had walked to get where she was at the academy. Gingerly placing the small dagger back in its place in the wall, she stepped down from the bed.

Ryuko noticed that the french doors leading to the balcony were open, the gentle breeze blowing the sheer floor length curtains there to and fro. Ryuko thought she caught the faint smell of cigarette smoke as she neared the opening to the outside world. She pushed the curtains aside, stepping onto the landing directly in front of the open doors. Satsuki sat in her bathrobe, hair still somewhat wet from showering and her back to Ryuko. In one hand she held a cup of tea, the pot resting on a small table beside her, half empty already. In her other hand she held a lit cigarette, and was peering over the countryside sprawling below.

Ryuko was surprised. Satsuki took such good care of her body, she was about the last person Ryuko ever expected to be indulging in such a practice. Ryuko quietly approached her sister from behind, taking care to remember that Satsuki was about the hardest person to sneak up on that Ryuko knew. When she was within arms reach of her, Ryuko quickly plucked the cigarette from her sister's hand, placing it in her own mouth.

“You know, you really shouldn't be engaging in such a naughty habit, nee-san.” Ryuko said, placing the cigarette in her mouth and taking a long drag.

Satsuki tried as hard as she could to hide her initial surprise, managing to conceal all but a slight twitch of her hand as the cigarette was snatched from it. Ryuko was about the only person that could sneak up on her like that, and part of her hated it. Satsuki was still trying to change the mindset that she had held for so long, that no one could be trusted and vulnerabilities were just flaws her enemies could exploit. Part of her wanted retribution for the slight of surprising her, but Satsuki fought the urge back down. She resolved to look slowly up at her sister, scowling with her large eyebrows furrowed intensely.

“You're one to talk. I would guess by your demeanor as well as your history that you're no stranger to one of those.” Satsuki said levelly, staring at Ryuko as the younger girl blew out the smoke, closing her eyes in pleasure. She meandered over to one of the vacant chairs on the balcony, scooted it up next to Satsuki, and poured herself some tea.

“Good to see you're making yourself at home, imouto.” Satsuki said gruffly, crossing her arms and returning her gaze once again to the countryside. Ryuko offered the smoldering cigarette back to Satsuki.

“I'm sorry, okay? It's been damn near forever since I've had one of those. At least for a couple years. I used to smoke them all the time, before I realized how stupid that was. How often do you do this sort of thing?” Ryuko said, sipping her tea and looking at Satsuki, concern clear in her eyes. Satsuki took another drag.

“It really isn't anything to speak of, Ryuko. Once a month, at most. It is a private and rare habit I have held since the beginning of Honnouji academy. The others never knew about it...in fact, you're the first person that has ever seen me doing it. Not even Soroi knows...” Satsuki said solemnly, folding her hands in her lap and looking at nothing in particular.

Ryuko made a placating gesture. “Hey, I'm not judging you. I just wanna know, is all. I can only imagine what kind of stress you had to endure being Queen Bitch all the time. I probably would've had to turn to stronger...herbal remedies. Were I in your position, I mean.” She said, smirking.

Satsuki snorted at the notion. “Do you mean marijuana? Please. Such trivial pursuits have never had a positive effect on me, as they only serve to slow me down. I seek only perfection.”

“Jeez, you need to lighten up, Sats. Be more like you were last night.” Ryuko said, contemplating. “Speaking of which, we really did it, didn't we? I'd say it was a huge damn success in my book. Everyone got drunk, shmoosed and danced like idiots.”

Satsuki softened, laying her head on the edge of the chair back and closing her eyes, smiling slightly. “Yes, it was quite an enjoyable time. Seeing everyone again after such a long time

gone...it was almost therapeutic."

"I'll say. Speaking of therapeutic..." Ryuko said, trailing off and getting up from her perch on the her chair.

Before Satsuki could open her eyes and question her, Ryuko was standing behind Satsuki, her hands resting on her tense shoulders. "Ryuko, what are you-"

"Shh. Thing is, after a night of heavy drinking, one can be pretty tense and not feel so good. I figure you're already so tense that adding any more tension on top of that can't be healthy. So just shut up and enjoy this, cause I ain't gonna do it very often." Ryuko said, beginning to knead Satsuki's shoulders.

Satsuki initially made to protest, every ounce of her screaming that she could not succumb to this kind of treatment, this kind of *enjoyment*. It was for the weak, it was for those that had to rely on others, which was, again, weak. But once Ryuko began working the stress and hangover from her tense muscles, Satsuki didn't much care about anything. Ryuko alternated between working her broad shoulders and long, slender neck, her hands sometimes venturing into Satsuki's thick head of cropped hair, massaging her scalp and temples.

Ryuko spoke as she worked. "So, I have to ask, what's up with Nonon?"

"Hm?" Satsuki replied, muscles loosening and not paying attention to much of anything.

"I mean what's with her attitude?" Ryuko asked. "It seems like she still holds a grudge against me or something. Do you think she's such a bitch to me cause I beat her back at the academy? Everyone else has gotten over me beating them..."

Satsuki exhaled softly. "In my extensive experience, when Nonon acts that way towards someone, she is usually doing one of two things: attempting to cover for something, or, in her own way, expressing her affection for someone. Sometimes she does it because it is a bit of both. However, I was under the impression that you two were getting along fairly well? There was the manner in which you both slept last night..."

Ryuko's face reddened and she looked away from Satsuki, her massaging becoming slightly distracted. “Yeah well, I didn't mind it or whatever. It seemed like neither did she, although she made me promise not to tell anyone about it. It's just that ever since then she's been acting like a total bitch to me, and I don't really know how to take it.”

Satsuki straightened herself and placed a strong hand over one of Ryuko's, still on her shoulder. She leaned her head backwards so as to look Ryuko in the eye. “You should talk to her, one-on-one, if you feel as if she is slighting you in any way. Use that resolve that I and everyone else know so well and demand the truth.”

Ryuko sighed, looking down and away from Satsuki's gaze. “Yeah, you're probably right. I'll try to get her alone at some point today and talk to her about it. If I can even do that, she seems attached at the hip to the rest of you guys.”

Satsuki released Ryuko's hand and stood fluidly, turning to face her younger sister. “Nonon is one of my oldest friends, and I know her better than anyone else. Despite how aloof and unkind she may seem at times, deep down she craves contact and attention. Myself and the other three have always fulfilled that need, and now that she knows that you're my sister, I'm sure she expects that of you as well.” Satsuki moved past Ryuko and back into her bedroom. “Come, let us return to our friends. I'm sure they're wondering where we've been.”

Indulgence

Chapter Notes

Here we go, some romance! Enjoy!

BONUS FUN: This chapter includes a rough recipe/directions for making an Old Fashioned, enjoy and GET DRUNK

Ryuko and Satsuki walked to the top of the long, curved staircase that led to the first floor. There was a faint sound emanating from below, only becoming apparent to the two girls now that they were slowly descending the stairs. The sound of orchestral music soaring and falling accompanied by a lilting piano came at them in small waves, and it grew louder and more defined as they reached the bottom of the stairs. Ryuko looked at Satsuki and cocked an eyebrow.

“Someone playin' music?” she said, suspicious.

Satsuki smiled and returned Ryuko's gaze. “It is without a doubt Nonon. She can never resist the urge to play the piano when she's here. Come, see for yourself.”

Ryuko and Satsuki entered the large living area of Kiryuin manor, the midday sun streaming in through the french doors, bathing the room in a warm yellowish light. Dust particles danced here and there in the sunbeams, almost as if along to the beautiful music filling the room. Sure enough, Nonon was seated, posture perfect, at the large onyx-black grand piano. The top was propped open, beautiful tinkling melodies streaming from the exposed strings along with the flowing orchestral music emanating from speakers inset into the walls all around the first floor of the manor, both inside and out. The piece had clear middle-eastern influences, and rose and fell with the petite girl's hands dancing up and down the keyboard. Ryuko stood frozen in the entryway, rooted to the spot. She couldn't remember the last time she had heard something so beautiful.

Satsuki caught her gaze and raised her eyebrows, as if to say “Pretty impressive, right?” She then motioned for Ryuko to move closer, Satsuki moving towards the seating area where the rest of her friends sat. Ryuko moved slowly and quietly to stand beside the piano, fidgeting nervously with her hands, not wanting to interrupt. Nonon's eyes were closed, and if she noticed Ryuko's presence, she didn't acknowledge her. The music went on easily for another three minutes, rising to a climax before ending with a quiet and mysterious note. As the last

note reverberated from the strings inside the piano, Nonon let her hands hover over the keys, her head hanging back. She then opened her eyes, noticed Ryuko and scowled, putting her balled fists on her hips.

“How long have you been standing there, transfer student?” She said sourly.

Ryuko met her intense gaze with wide eyes, not hiding her wonderment. “Long enough,” she said. “What was that?” Ryuko asked, genuinely curious. The piece was intense and emotional, and at the same time dark and mysterious. It was packed with a sense of wonder and adventure that drew Ryuko to it. Things with those qualities tended to hold a good deal of allure for her.

“Hmph. I'm not surprised you didn't recognize it. It's called 'The Flight into Egypt', first movement of the Church Windows suite by Ottorino Respighi. It's something only *cultured* people like myself and Satsuki would recognize, let alone understand. Isn't that right, Satsuki-chan?” Nonon called to Satsuki across the cavernous room.

“Be nice, Nonon!” Satsuki called back, a frown instantly appearing on the pink-haired girl's face as it grew red. Ryuko sneered and plopped down on the bench next to Nonon, scooting the smaller girl's frame over with a shimmy of her hip.

“What are you- hey!” Nonon fussed as Ryuko swiped Nonon's phone, which was synched to the speakers around the house, from the ledge above the piano keys and began browsing through her streaming library. “Relax, princess. I want to show you something. I'm no expert with classical music by any stretch of the imagination, but if there's one thing I *do* know, it's movie scores. Here! Check this out.”

Ryuko found what she was looking for and selected it on the phone's screen, setting it back down on the piano. Melancholy and sentimental piano music slowly emanated from the speakers around the manor, accompanied by low and pleasing orchestral chords. Nonon, who at first had crossed her arms and was staring stubbornly at her feet, slowly placed her hands in her lap, her face tilting upwards. She turned her head towards Ryuko, her eyes growing wider by the second. Ryuko stared into the small girl's eyes, transfixed. They were large, round pools of intensity. They seemed to contain all of the pent-up emotions that Nonon guarded so closely, and only now was Ryuko beginning to get a glimpse into her true self. Ryuko couldn't help but lose herself in those bright sieves of emotion. There was something

so familiar about those eyes, so comforting even though the girl they belonged to seemed so abrasive and harsh.

“What...what the hell is this?” Nonon gasped, raw emotion creeping into her face despite her best efforts to hide it; to recede back into herself, covering the feelings with jibes and fake anger. Ryuko was shaken from her thoughts by her voice, much softer and different than it usually was. What was it she sensed in that voice? Was it...vulnerability? Perhaps the two girls, despite Nonon's attempts to make the contrary seem true, shared more in common than Ryuko initially thought.

Ryuko smiled, her eyes lighting up. She had succeeded in bringing the princess out of her shell, even if it might be only temporary. “It's the theme from a movie I don't think a lot of people in Japan have seen, called 'Contact'. It's an American movie. The score was done by a guy named...Alan Silvestri. I'm not surprised you haven't heard of it, princess.” Ryuko said, wracking her brain for the composer's name before it finally came to her. The awkward western syllables tumbled out of her mouth with a heavy Japanese accent, not at all used to speaking English.

“It's pretty damn sentimental but...it's beautiful.” Nonon said, staring off into space before closing her eyes. They sat there on the piano bench, the two girls quite close together, and silently listened to the rest of the piece. The music swelled multiple times, and every time it did, Ryuko was close enough to Nonon to hear her breath catch in her throat. It was nice knowing now that they actually had something to break the icy relationship they had had up to this point, and Ryuko was significantly content.

The piece ended, and Ryuko looked over at Nonon. Her small, deft hands were folded neatly in her lap, head hung downwards, eyes closed. She took a deep breath, before placing her hands gingerly back over the keys of the piano. “Play it again, Ryuko.” she said.

Ryuko smiled, pleased that Nonon used her actual name, not calling her “transfer student” or even “Matoi”. She pressed the back button on Nonon's phone, making the recording start from the beginning once again. To her astonishment, as soon as the sweet piano melodies began to emanate from the speakers, so too did they emanate from the piano itself. Ryuko looked at Nonon, astonished. “You...you can play this after hearing it one time?” Ryuko gasped, not wanting to interrupt but her curiosity getting the better of her. Nonon gently tilted her face upwards again, eyes still closed, but this time with a small smile on her face. “It's a talent I was born with. Along with having perfect pitch, I can pretty much play anything after hearing it once.” Nonon said before returning to her playing.

Ryuko sat there for a short while, watching Nonon's fingers move deftly up and down the keys once again, matching every aspect of the recording perfectly. She was impressed.

Ryuko quietly removed herself from the piano bench, moving towards the seating area. Sanageyama had now given up trying to beat Iori in Street Fighter, and was snoozing lazily on his side of the couch, feet up on the nearest coffee table. Inumuta had taken Uzu's place, fighting Iori to a draw in every match. It seemed as if there was to be no clear victor.

Satsuki was seated on her own couch now as well, and somehow during the time Ryuko had spent away with Nonon, Mako had ended up on Satsuki's couch, back asleep with her head laying in Satsuki's lap. Satsuki had a small smile on her face, and was stroking Mako's short hair with one hand, reading something on a tablet with the other. Gamagoori sat alone on his couch, drinking out of a teacup that was much to small for him pensively.

Ryuko moved to stand in front of her sister and best friend, smiling with her hands on her hips. “You trying to steal my best friend, nee-san?” She said jokingly, plopping down on the other side of the couch near Mako's feet.

Satsuki made to respond, but it seemed as if Ryuko's voice had finally brought Mako out of her endless slumber. She sat bolt upright before enveloping Ryuko in a tight hug, squealing with delight. “Ryuko-chan! I thought Jakazure-senpai had stolen you away from me forever!”

Ryuko flushed as Satsuki let out a snort of amusement. This was going to be a point of contention. “I-I don't know what you're talking about! Anyways, I should be the one that's worried, Mako. Gamagoori over there's tryin' to keep you all to himself! Ain't that right, Toad?!” Ryuko said loudly, pointing across the room at Gamagoori.

Ira choked on his tea, almost spilling what still remained in the cup. His face grew red and he stood, pointing back at Ryuko with a huge finger. “I-I AM DOING NO SUCH THING, MATOI!” He screamed.

Everyone in the room, including Nonon still playing the piano, burst out laughing. Even Satsuki let out an uncharacteristic giggle, while Ryuko slapped her knee and guffawed louder than anyone else. Mako, on the other hand, leaped at Gamagoori and gave him a tight hug as usual, whispering “It's okay senpai, I know you're not trying to steal me.”

Ryuko, when her fit of laughter had subsided, stood up from the couch and gestured to Mako. “Hey, Mako! Come away from your boyfriend for a sec and help me make some drinks for all these stuck-up fools.”

Mako jumped down from her hug, Gamagoori still fuming. “Hai, Ryuko-chan!”

They moved to the large kitchen area of the manor's living room, Mako practically bouncing with excitement. “A little hair of the dog, eh Ryuko-chan?” Mako said, making a silly face and jokingly elbowing Ryuko's arm lightly. Ryuko tousled Mako's hair fondly, before methodically removing seven frosted tumbler glasses from the large chest freezer, smiling.

“These are gonna be a little more tasty than all that crap we were drinking last night. We're makin' ourselves some old fashioned's.” Ryuko said, adding quietly “Plus I know Kiryuin's got some fancy-ass liquor around here somewhere.”

Mako giggled. “Oooooh, fancy drinks!”

The kitchen really was like something out of a dream, at least in reference to making a drink such as this. All of the ingredients were readily available, with some help from Soroi of course: high-quality simple syrup for sweetness, an old fancy bottle of almost alchemical bitters, freshly picked oranges, and sweet cocktail cherries. Finally, Soroi held a bottle out to Ryuko in his white-gloved hands, smiling.

“I believe this should more than suffice for the whiskey of choice, Ryuko-sama. We have had this bottle for ages, but I am sad to say you are the first to use it.” He said, Ryuko taking the Kanji-inscribed bottle from him. It was Suntory, a Japanese brand of whiskey, and what was more it was “Hibiki”, their finest and most expensive blend.

“Are you sure you want *me* using this, Soroi?” Ryuko asked gingerly.

Soroi bowed deeply and responded. “I cannot imagine a more appropriate person to christen it, Ryuko-sama.”

Ryuko smiled, Mako squeaked with delight. Never had Ryuko felt more at home and as part of a family as she did right now. It was an unusual feeling that she was still getting used to, but it was pleasing either way.

Ryuko cracked her knuckles, and with Mako's help she got to work. They first selected a large glass for mixing the ingredients, pouring a perfectly measured amount of the golden-brown whiskey into it for each drink. They then added the simple syrup and the bitters, along with a couple of standard-sized ice cubes. Ryuko mixed the concoction for about a minute, making sure the resulting liquid was cold and thoroughly blended. The mixture was then strained by Mako into one of the frosted glasses, coming just under halfway up the glass. Ryuko then sliced a small piece of orange peel from an orange, wringing it out making sure the oils landed in the glass. She then gingerly placed a single large, circular ice cube from a special tray into the glass, along with the orange peel and a single cocktail cherry. This process was repeated one by one seven times, until Mako had delivered perfectly crafted cocktails to everyone save Nonon.

Nonon was still busy playing the piano as Ryuko waltzed up to her, carrying two drinks, one for herself and one for the small pink-haired girl. As usual, Nonon was in her own world, and as Ryuko gently touched Nonon's cheek with the cold frosted glass she heard a crash of keys and a string of expletives.

“Transfer student! What the f-...oh.” Nonon's voice trailed off as Ryuko pushed the stiff drink into her hands, straddling the far side of the piano bench, facing Nonon. Ryuko smiled widely at her, and to her immense surprise Nonon shone a small smile back at her, before clinking her glass against Ryuko's. They both took hearty swigs, shivering with delight once the full impact of the strong drinks hit them. They both simultaneously let out contented sighs, before Nonon rested her drink atop the piano and began playing with renewed vigor.

Nonon had little experience in playing jazz, but she was able to remember most of what she knew now as she played a lively and loud medley of all the jazz songs that came to her mind. The mood in the room, aided by the generous amount of alcohol Ryuko had drowned the drinks with, changed considerably. Soon enough Mako and Ryuko had taken to impromptu and clumsy swing dancing in the open space near the piano, soon joined by Uzu and Satsuki who were much more graceful and coordinated.

As Nonon transitioned into an Ellington standard (Take the A Train), even the other men in the room seemed to be getting into it. Iori, Inumuta and Gamagoori all leaned on either walls or the edges of couches, watching the proceedings intently and snapping along. Ryuko even at one point thought she saw Gamagoori tapping his foot along to the music.

They continued like this for what seemed like hours, dancing, singing and enjoying more stiff drinks. The sound of lively discussion and laughter danced off the high walls of the living area, as a very peculiar and incomprehensible group of friends and family enjoyed a well-deserved day of rest.

The rest of the day was spent in much the same fashion. The manor had an impressive outdoor kitchen, and the men of the group had used it heartily once they had all ventured outside into the mild late afternoon/early evening air. Gamagoori and Sanageyama had taken it upon themselves to grill hearty pieces of chicken and fish on the outdoor grill to use in a Hibachi dish that would serve as their dinner, Iori and Inumuta using a giant wok to make a perfectly crafted fried rice that the meats would be served over. Surprising everyone, Satsuki had prepared an alchemically perfect sauce to use in the dish, packed with flavor and adding immensely to the simple Hibachi dish.

Ryuko, Mako and Nonon had delegated themselves to continuing Ryuko's mixologist streak, trying ever more delicious and adventurous recipes and nursing both the others and themselves with the finished products. They cranked out western classics like dark and stormies, manhattans, margaritas, and even a mint julep or two. The three girls also tried their hand at some more eastern-style cocktails, including lotus blossoms, mai tais and the Blue Screen of Death, a new cocktail Ryuko had picked up from a bartender late one night on in a back-alley bar in Tokyo. It involved blue curacao and was very, very strong.

By the time dinner was served, the whole group was feeling good and tipsy, some much more than others. Ryuko felt as if they had used at least half of the booze Satsuki had on hand.

Dinner had gone off without a hitch, and afterwords everyone had returned inside to once again lounge around and enjoy not having any responsibilities. Nonon and Ryuko had returned to the piano, having warmed considerably to one another since the start of the day

(due to a combination of discovering shared interests and a generous helping of alcohol), and traded off playing music from Nonon's phone. Nonon had easily played along to every song she recognized, and every one she didn't she was able to play after one listen as usual.

As evening turned into night, one by one their friends retired into one of the numerous guest bedrooms on the second floor. Satsuki was one of the last to leave for her room, smiling slightly and quirking her eyebrow at Ryuko as she made to leave the room. Ryuko stuck her tongue out at her before giggling drunkenly. The last two to retire were Mako and Gamagoori, Gamagoori offering to escort Mako to one of the guest bedrooms since she didn't know the layout of the house. Mako had rushed to the two girls at the piano, hugging them both tightly and wishing them goodnight as Gamagoori bowed to both of them. As the odd couple marched off upstairs, Nonon and Ryuko gossiped excitedly and drunkenly about the possibilities.

“Well, I think we know what's happening there...” Nonon said, smirking.

Ryuko snorted. “Oh, I don't know, maybe the Toad's just being chivalrous?” She said sarcastically.

Nonon grimaced and shook her head. “Please. All men are the same, they act like they're all noble and sweet but as soon as you show 'em a little attention they slobber all over the place.”

Ryuko fold her arms and nodded once, solidly. “You're right. Men are just the worst!” She said sarcastically again, before bursting out laughing. Nonon proceeded to punch her in the arm, returning to her piano playing. This time she was playing without the aid of a recording; Chopin's “Raindrop Prelude” in D flat major. Ryuko scooted closer to her on the bench, her head slightly swaying back and forth with the effects of the alcohol.

She resolved this problem by laying her head on Nonon's shoulder, closing her eyes and letting the sweet music wash over her. She expected Nonon to reprimand her or demand that she remove her head, but no such fight ever came. Ryuko opened her eyes again, watching the smaller girl's dainty hands dance to and fro gently along the ivory keys of the expensive piano. She felt the muscles in her shoulder and attached arm shift ever so slightly as her left hand moved left and right, playing the lower registered parts excellently.

Ryuko hadn't noticed minutes later that the music had stopped, and the piece was over. Silence filled the room, but it wasn't the kind that Ryuko usually hated. It was a subtle, soft silence. The silence that echoed with a day well-spent, with the memories of friends and family. There was a feeling of resolution in the air, of a problem having been righted. This feeling of contentment was unusual and unexpected to both women, and they reveled in it.

Nonon was the first to softly break that silence.

“Ryuko.” She said, almost whispering.

“Hm?” Ryuko answered absently, her head comfortable on Nonon's tiny shoulder.

“Why are you being like this?” Nonon said, a note of conflict in her voice.

“What do you mean?” Ryuko answered.

“I mean...I mean being nice to me. I mean making me drinks and asking me about music and all that shit. Why are you doing it? Have I ever given you a reason to even want to be friends with me?”

Ryuko lifted her head from Nonon's shoulder, looking into Nonon's quivering, beautiful eyes, fighting the urge to just stare into them forever. “Nonon. You're my sister's best friend. I wanna say that I *have* to get along with you, but it's a lot more than that. I really *want* to, too. You and her have been through thick and thin together, and I'm only just getting started. If there's one thing in this world that humanizes her, it's you. Every time I see her smile, it's around you. So when I say that I love my sister, I also have to say that I love...” Ryuko trailed off, her face growing hotter by the second.

She felt a small hand clasp over her hand, it's warmth filling a hole in her heart that she didn't know was there. They stared into each others eyes for what felt like an eternity, maybe even two eternities. Ryuko could see Nonon's bright eyes shining in the dim light of the room, filled partially with tears. Nonon's voice shook when she spoke.

“I...I'm sorry I've been so mean to you, Ryuko. I just...I just don't know how to deal with these feelings. The past year has been such a whirlwind. I've been with Satsuki-chan for as long as I remember, and yet only in the two or so months when everything was happening at Honnouji did I ever start feeling as conflicted as I do now. Satsuki-chan has a sister? And it also happens to be the new transfer student that I hate and simultaneously have a huge crush on? Like, how is any reasonable person supposed to deal with that level of social complexity?! It just adds a whole new level to everything, when all you want at night is to be held by someone that's supposed to be your enemy. And then that enemy turns out to be your best friend's sister she never even knew she had...it's fucked up!”

Nonon's words broke up at the end of her soliloquy, devolving into choked sobs followed by gushing tears. Ryuko pulled Nonon into a tight hug, Nonon heaving against her. This was not the way that she had imagined this night going. She was very, very glad she had had something to drink beforehand because having your sister's best friend admit to having a huge crush on you is not something anyone would want to take sober. Especially when you have to admit to yourself that you have all of those feelings as well. Ryuko sighed, her face still red.

She held Nonon by the shoulders as her sobs turned quieter. Ryuko moved her so that she was looking into Ryukos face, cupping her face in both hands and using her thumbs to wipe her tears away. She smiled, not really knowing why. There was something about staring into this girl's eyes that made Ryuko melt. She hated to see those large bright pools sullied with tears.

The two sat for a long while, staring into each others eyes as Ryuko held Nonon's face in her hands. Neither quite knew who started it, but their faces slowly inched towards one another, their eyes closing. Ryuko had no idea what was going on. What was she doing? This was her sister's best friend, goddamn it! She had always been receptive of the idea of being with women but this was a completely different level-

Their lips touched, and all thoughts were blissfully jettisoned from both their minds.

It was like heaven.

They sat there for what could very well have been years, slowly enveloped in one another, kissing more and more passionately. Ryuko had to admit that even with her limited experience, she could tell that Nonon was a fantastic and romantic kisser. Her small hand caressed Ryuko's cheek, before moving to the back of her head and gently burying itself in

her thick hair, massaging her scalp. Ryuko rested one of her hands on Nonon's hip, her fingers feeling under the borrowed track jacket at the skin there. It was so soft, like the finest velvet. Ryuko wasn't surprised.

Ryuko broke the embrace of their lips, moving to place small, soft kisses along Nonon's slender neck. Nonon gasped quietly and buried both deft hands in Ryuko's thick head of black hair, maneuvering Ryuko's head so that her ear was right in front of Nonon's mouth. With a breathy whisper, she said:

“Take me upstairs.”

Ryuko simply chuckled very quietly, before effortlessly gathering Nonon up, one arm under her back, the other behind the crook of her knees. Ryuko was strong and muscular for sure, and Nonon seemed only as light as a feather in her arms as they ascended the stairs, stealing passionate kisses almost every step of the way. Ryuko entered one of the vacant guest bedrooms, and gingerly laid Nonon's petite frame down onto the billowy soft king-sized bed. As she began removing unwanted clothing from both herself and the other girl in the room, Ryuko had one final thought before diving headfirst into uncharted romantic territory:

This was *definitely* not the way she thought tonight would turn out.

Conflict

Chapter Notes

> WARNING! Some mature content follows, reader discretion is advised. As always, I hope you enjoy it!

Ryuko's world exploded in a symphony of soft skin, fragrant hair and serenely expressive eyes.

They enveloped each other, her and Nonon, now gleefully absent of all barriers between flesh. Ryuko marveled at how the older, smaller girl in her arms so easily took control of the situation once they had flopped into bed together, furiously removing clothes and kissing each other with a passion that almost bordered on desperation.

With strength defying her small stature, Nonon flipped Ryuko onto her back with ease, straddling her and pinning her wrists to the bed with her own hands. She kissed Ryuko hungrily, Ryuko thoroughly enjoying the warmth of Nonon's body lying on top of hers. They seemed to melt into one another as the feelings they both shared for each other manifested completely and utterly.

Nonon kissed Ryuko's neck fiercely, Ryuko burying one hand in her long pink hair, the other caressing the vertebrae of Nonon's slender back. Ryuko once again marveled, between pleasured gasps, how unbelievably soft Nonon's skin was. She could have just sit there in bed with her, running her hands up and down that smooth frame for hours. Her thoughts trailed off into nothingness when Nonon began to move the workings of her mouth further down Ryuko's neck to her collarbone, nipping at it before raising her head and smiling mischievously.

“You know, transfer student, for a vagrant bitch you don't seem very confident in the sack.”

Ryuko snorted, her face contorting into a sneer. “Yeah, well for a stuck up prude I guess I'm kind of surprised you're so good at this.”

Ryuko sat up so Nonon was sitting on her thighs, the smaller girl's shoulders about face level. Ryuko wrapped her arms around Nonon's waist, burying her face between Nonon's modest but perfect breasts. Ryuko kissed the space between them, and Nonon gasped with delight. Ryuko moved her mouth to breathe warm air onto one of the small nipples there, looking up into Nonon's beautiful face.

“Maybe you need to bring me out of my shell.” Ryuko said with a sarcastic sneer, before wrapping her mouth around the mound of flesh as Nonon whimpered.

Ryuko had to admit to herself that she clearly wasn't anywhere near as experienced as Nonon, but she was doing her best. She had “hooked up” with a couple guys and girls back before she had arrived at Honnouji academy, but this was completely new territory to her and she was doing her best not to excitedly embarrass herself. Nonon also happened to be the most beautiful specimen she had been romantically involved with.

After a short while it was made abundantly clear to Ryuko that it was time to change pace.

Nonon forcefully pushed Ryuko's shoulders down back onto the bed, repeating their original position. Nonon looked hungrily down at the ample bust pooled on Ryuko's chest, placing her hands carefully around them, pushing them together. Imitating what Ryuko had done to her, Nonon buried her face in Ryuko's bosom, Ryuko letting out a choked cry as Nonon's warm, wet mouth closed around one of Ryuko's nipples. She worked in this way until Ryuko was practically begging Nonon, one hand buried deep into her pink hair and the other stifling her loud cries of pleasure.

Nonon clearly sensed that it was time to begin work elsewhere, and began kissing down Ryuko's smooth stomach towards her nether regions. Ryuko's face was red as a fresh apple, both nervous and excited about what clearly would come next. This was a step that she was woefully inexperienced in taking, but she trusted Nonon in guiding her. She was doing all the work anyways.

Nonon's first touch was gentle, but Ryuko was already so built up from foreplay that it made her arch her back and squeal immediately, until she was able to stifle it with one of her hands. Nonon looked up at her in a silent warning, both of them worried about exposing what was clearly a new found and hidden love to the others in the house so soon. How to explain this to

Mako, to the rest of the Elite Four, to Satsuki...it was going to be interesting. Ryuko could only worry for a split second, however, when Nonon resumed her work.

It went on like this for several minutes, Nonon alternating between the use of her mouth, fingers or both, Ryuko arching her back and stifling pleasured moans with an open palm over her mouth. She occasionally buried a hand in Nonon's hair once again, until Nonon would swat it away and stare up into her face with those ridiculously expressive eyes as she worked.

Finally it all came to a head, and Ryuko's mind was shut down temporarily with pure ecstasy and ultimate pleasure. Nonon certainly knew what she was doing, and Ryuko's reaction was proof. She cared not as her hand slipped from her mouth to grasp at a clutch of the sheets, arching her back once again and screaming her approval. When it was all over, Ryuko was left a sweaty, disheveled, quivering wreck.

Nonon continued like this for what seemed to Ryuko like hours, building her up into an impossibly powerful climax, each time more and more intense. She played Ryuko like an instrument, conducted her like an orchestra. It was an eye opening experience, and eventually after the third time Ryuko just couldn't take any more and collapsed into a heap of herself, panting.

Nonon moved to rejoin her, the two of them cuddling and kissing passionately until Ryuko's breathing returned to normal.

Nonon stared into Ryuko's eyes and smirked. “I'm not gonna ask you to return the favor just yet, transfer student. I want there to be a next time.”

Ryuko snorted and closed her eyes, nuzzling her face into the nape of Nonon's neck comfortably. “Whatever you say, princess.” she returned lazily.

“I told you not to call me that.” Nonon said, placing her chin on top of Ryuko's head.

“But yer my princess, princess...” Ryuko said, clearly delirious, still somewhat drunk and tired.

Nevertheless, Nonon's face grew red and hot. She smiled, not sarcastically but a real, genuine smile. This was a long, interesting and complicated road they had just begun to walk down, but right now all she cared about was the object of her affection nestled deeply into her arms.

She finally had someone to hold her as she drifted off to sleep.

Ryuko awoke with a start, eyes snapping open immediately and a cold, clammy sweat clinging to her body. As she began to realize that her bad dream had only been that, a bad dream, she relaxed a bit. It had been *that* dream, one that she had had almost once a month since she had had that fateful encounter in the basement of her father's old mansion.

Senketsu's desperate screams for help echoing around inside her head, begging for his life as he's cut to pieces-

No. That hadn't happened. He had died a hero and a friend. Her best friend. And now she was fulfilling his wish, living a comfortably happy life with her friends. Her friends, and...

She felt a small hand gently shift inside her own, and her heart softened. The memories of the previous night's events came flooding through Ryuko's mind like a great torrent as she closed her hand around the tiny, pink-haired girl's next to her. They had inexorably launched themselves down a path that would no doubt be wrought with confusion, exploration and self-discovery. Not yet were the ramifications of their actions apparent, but they soon could be.

It mattered not to Ryuko. It had all come as such a surprise, the upwelling of romantic feelings for this girl that had so long been her adversary and then an unwilling ally. It was so unlikely, but once Ryuko had fully given in to her temptation she could not have been happier. The strong feelings she held for this tiny girl in the bed next to her might not have been apparent until last night, but now they dominated her thoughts.

Ryuko gently stroked Nonon's cheek with one hand before planting a soft kiss upon her forehead. The feelings of terror she had felt at the end of her dream were gone now, replaced by contentment and serenity. If this was the way she always felt around Nonon, then she had no regrets. She was beautiful and Ryuko couldn't wait to face down their future together.

Ryuko realized that sleep was not in her immediate future, and she made to get up and make the most of her early rise. She gently removed her hand from Nonon's, placing another gentle kiss on her forehead before slipping out of the huge bed. Nonon shifted, but didn't wake as Ryuko made to put on her clothes from the previous day, making sure to take her small keyring with her. She was still paranoid about the keys to her new car. Slipping silently into the hall, she almost jumped right back out of her clothes when a voice spoke to her from in the direction of the stairs.

“Good morning, Ryuko-sama. I have brought you a fresh change of clothes, as well as some tea. Satsuki-sama requests your presence down beside the lake at your leisure.” Soroi said before handing her the clothes and a saucer with a full teacup on top. It was diluted with plenty of milk and sugar, just the way she liked it.

“Oh! Uh, thanks Soroi.” Ryuko stammered, as Soroi bowed and whisked off down the stairs.

Ryuko found the nearest bathroom in the cavernous manor, and changed quickly while occasionally sipping her tea. She was worried about Satsuki's intentions. Did she know? Was she mad that her sister and her best friend had...Ryuko preferred not to think about it, and instead finished her tea as she strolled through the manor and out the back doors towards the lake.

The sound of grunts and the racket of bamboo striking bamboo grew louder as she approached the shore of the lake and, inevitably, Satsuki. Satsuki was indeed there, however she wasn't alone. Her and Sanageyama were engaged in a pitched battle, flying at each other gracefully and striking fast enough that Ryuko couldn't pick out individual strikes. Both were stripped to combat readiness, Uzu shirtless and wearing only loose martian arts pants, Satsuki only wearing a sports bra and workout shorts. They each held a *shinai,* a traditional bamboo sword used in Kendo, and were beating at each other furiously.

Ryuko stood at a distance and watched them for a while, noticing that the area she had entered was clearly Satsuki's sword training arena. There were a dozen shredded bamboo and wood combat dummies, and Ryuko noticed with interest that one of them was smoldering, Bakuzan Gako and Kouryu lying neatly in the grass in front of it. Ryuko crossed her arms and cocked an eyebrow.

The fight came to a head, Sanageyama spinning inside one of Satsuki's attacks and beating her exposed side with a vicious strike, smiling. Satsuki partially crumpled.

“Looks like a finally got you, Sat-UGH” Sanageyama managed.

It was a feint. Satsuki had feigned doubling over in pain to lower herself to Sanageyama's waist level, driving her *shinai* up between his legs and flinging him up and over her head, crashing down on the far side of her. Satsuki straightened and positioned herself in her signature pose, standing ramrod straight, feet shoulder width apart with both hands on the top of her *shinai* propped against the ground.

“Looks like I win this one, Uzu. You might think about making sure your enemies are fully defeated before you start gloating.” Satsuki said, poised as ever. Her bobbed haircut blew gently in the breeze.

Sanageyama looked legitimately hurt for a split second, before breaking into a smile and rising. He bowed slowly and very low, rising to meet her cold gaze with his warm eyes. “Looks like you win again, Satsuki-sama. I'll be sure not to underestimate you again.”

“See that you don't.”

As Satsuki said that, Ryuko could have sworn she saw Satsuki smile and wink for a split second before turning her hardened gaze towards Ryuko.

“Matoi. I was hoping you'd join us. I trust you had a good night's sleep?” Satsuki said, remaining in her domineering pose.

Matoi? What the hell was going on here? Ryuko wondered, cocking an eyebrow and deciding to play along for the time being. The others had started to emerge from the house, and out of the corner of her eye she saw Sanageyama corral them at a distance, saying something out of earshot. Something was definitely wrong.

“So, Ryuko Matoi. It's been quite a while since we last faced off. How would you feel about a duel?” Satsuki said as Ryuko turned back around to face her. She was just fast enough to catch Satsuki stomping on the hilt of Bakuzan Gako, the dagger flying off the ground and into her outstretched hand, her opposite already holding Bakuzan Kouryu.

Things were starting to feel like how they were in the past, Ryuko thought. And while many bad memories resided there, Ryuko had to admit to herself that this level of sibling rivalry held a grave appeal to her wildest tendencies. She sneered, falling right back into her old character.

“Heh. If that's what you want, Kiryuin. Just be warned I've got something that you might not want to see!” She said defiantly.

Satsuki spun the Gako in her palm, raising an eyebrow and moving to one end of the battle space. Ryuko naturally moved to the other end, and (happy that she remembered it) snapped a small, red pointy object from her keyring, holding it up to glint in the sun.

A series of clicks, whirs and “SHING”s sounded and soon in her hand Ryuko Matoi held one of the most feared and revered weapons in all of Japan: killer of clothing, bane to life fibers everywhere. It was the red scissor-blade, the sword scissor, symbol of the rebellion against life fibers, tyranny and injustice.

With an audible “clink”, Ryuko held it up in all it's glory for all to see. A huge gasp went of from the gathered crowd of friends, but Satsuki just smiled devilishly.

“Good to see you still carry that around with you, Matoi. Today you shall prove your worthiness to me, or you will fade into obscurity with all the others I've defeated! Let us duel!” Satsuki yelled, her voice carrying over the surrounding hillsides.

They walked towards each other menacingly, a huge gust of wind erupting around them as their respective willpower faced off. Ryuko had absolutely no idea what was going on, but she was going along with it willingly enough. It would be at this point Senketsu would normally tell her her blood was running hot, and that it was time to fight.

“NYYYEAAAAAAAGH!” Ryuko threw herself at Satsuki, thrusting the sword scissor at her in a piercing motion. Both onyx-black blades crossed in a furious block, the three blades meeting and holding there with a deafening “CLANG”. They both grimaced, and Ryuko and Satsuki's faces moved to be just inches apart.

Quietly and furiously, so that no one else could hear, Satsuki stared deep into Ryuko's burning eyes and uttered a single sentence that clarified the entire situation, and simultaneously chilled her to the bone:

“You will prove to me that you are worthy of Nonon, or you will be defeated.”

Resolution

Chapter Notes

Ready...fight!

“You will prove to me that you are worthy of Nonon, or you will be defeated.”

With that, Ryuko's eyes widened and her grip on the sword scissor slackened just enough for Satsuki to notice. Grimacing, Satsuki summoned her immense strength and drove both blocking Bakuzan blades upward, throwing Ryuko backwards dozens of feet, her soles skidding across the grass and leaving a scorched trail. Ryuko panted, surprised but now fully grasping the situation at hand.

She was going to have to finish this fight, one way or another.

On the sidelines, Mako and Nonon were worriedly and frantically calling to the two girls, trying to intervene in the fight but Sanageyama was preventing them doing so with all his might.

“Oi, Satsuki, transfer student, what the HELL do you think you're doing?! You're going to kill each other!” Nonon shrieked, while Mako bounced up and down, calling to Ryuko.

“Ryuko-chaaaaan! I understand about sibling rivalry but this is kinda crazy, don't you think? Satsuki-sama, please don't hurt Ryuko-chan! PLEASE!”

Gamagoori, Inumuta and Iori simply shared knowing glances and watched intently, nervousness on all of their faces plain to see.

“I knew this day would eventually come. It was only a matter of time before they had a falling out.” Houka said, pushing his glasses upwards on his nose and shaking his head.

“This is very unbecoming of those two. They should know better than to solve their petty differences by fighting, they lack discipline!” Gamagoori rumbled, arms crossed.

“I have a feeling that I'm going to be doing some on-the-fly repairs to their clothing after this is all over...” Iori said quietly, hands in his pockets and staring up at the sky.

Ryuko swung another devastating strike at Satsuki, again clanging against her blades and catching. Ryuko pushed downward with all her might, trying to break the block but with no success. She managed to sneak a glimpse at the gathered crowd of her worried friends, and caught a look of genuine concern on Nonon's face, something Ryuko had never seen before. It threw her off guard again, giving Satsuki time to break the block and slash at Ryuko's face with Bakuzan Gako. Ryuko threw herself backward, arching her back trying to avoid the strike.

She landed about ten feet away from Satsuki, panting. A small cut appeared on her cheek, dripping blood down onto her lips. The taste of her own blood filled her mouth, and combined with the memory of that look Nonon had on her face...

Ryuko's blood boiled with renewed purpose.

They continued to throw themselves at each other for what seemed like hours, the sound of their blades ringing off each other and into the surrounding hillsides. Eventually the two sisters stood across from one another, beaten, bruised and bloodied but still standing. Each had a multitude of bruises, small cuts and scrapes, and they were panting like they had just finished a marathon. Ryuko grimaced. She wasn't going to last much longer, but she would be damned if she wasn't “worthy” of Nonon.

It was time to pull out her trump card.

“It's time to finish this, Kiryuin!” She screamed, the handle of her scissor swiveling outwards into her opposite hand.

Satsuki sneered as the blade opened, revealing a larger secondary blade as the whole assembly transformed into a huge, gleaming red sword. Ryuko lifted it above her head triumphantly, preparing to strike.

“SCISSOR BLADE! DECAPITATION MODE!” Ryuko shrieked, throwing herself one last time at her older sister. The two collided, and from the sidelines it looked like a grenade had gone off. A deafening, powerful shockwave ripped through the spectators, forcing them to throw their arms up and protect their faces as the whirlwind whipped around them.

When the dust cleared and the wind subsided, the spectators beheld a sight the likes of which they had not seen since the fall of Honnouji. A sizable smoking crater lay at the scene of the fight, Satsuki and Ryuko lying dead center in the middle of it. They were panting furiously, their clothes ripped to shreds, their respective blades lying scattered in the dirt.

Nonon and Mako gasped, running towards the sisters.

“Oh god-”

“RYUKO-CHAN!”

They knelt beside them, the two sisters seconds away from passing out. Nonon grasped Satsuki's shoulders desperately.

“Satsuki-chan! What the hell were you guys thinking?! You could have killed each other, goddamnit!”

Satsuki looked up at her best friend, smiling weakly. “Make sure...she knows...she is worthy...” She said sparingly, before slumping in Nonon's arms, passed out. She was beyond puzzled.

“Worthy? What the hell does THAT mean?!”

Meanwhile, fat tears rolled down Mako's face as she pleaded with Ryuko to stay conscious. She took one of Ryuko's hands in hers. “Ryuko-chan, Ryuko-chan please! I don't know what all of this was about, but you have to stay awake, at least as long as it takes to get you into the house!”

Ryuko gave Mako an eerily similar weak smile, before muttering “Just like old times...” and passing out as well.

Nonon caught Mako's eyes, a hard determination setting in to her features. “Underachiever, come on! Let's get these idiots into the house!”

Mako wiped her tears away and nodded furiously in agreement. “Right!”

Belying both of their small stature, they both took a sister in their arms and ran towards the manor past the group of men still gathered there. The men shared puzzled glances before all shrugging and running after the two girls, holding doors open and beginning the preparations for what medical treatment they could administer. With the help of Soroi, who happened to be trained extensively in first aid, Ryuko and Satsuki were bandaged, splinted and cared for intensively for several hours in the living room, before being moved to a guest bedroom with two separate beds where their status could more easily be monitored and they could recuperate in peace.

Mako and Nonon remained there with them, the rest of the guests pacing the house nervously and checking up on them from time to time.

It wasn't until later that day that the two woke up.

Ryuko's eyes snapped open, and she was greeted with a world she had never seen before. It was pure, endless white as far as the eye could see. Rolling hillsides melted off into the distance, covered in a fresh blanket of pristine white snow. Flakes of the stuff fell gently from the sky, and yet Ryuko was not cold in the slightest. Close to her on the hillside stood a small neglected shrine, a single candle flickering on the altar.

“Ryuko.”

The deep voice filled her very soul, pouring into the deepest recesses of her being. She knew that voice, better than perhaps any other. Tilting her head down towards the rest of her body, Ryuko was startled and yet comforted to realize a red and black sailor uniform was all she was wearing. From the left breast of the uniform, a solitary red, orange and yellow eye met her gaze, unshakable. When she spoke, Ryuko's voice seemed distant somehow, as if she were speaking from far away.

“S-Senketsu? But you're...” Ryuko began.

“Dead? Yes, I know. This is but a dream, Ryuko. A figment. I have gone to a better place, though it may not seem it now.”

Ryuko's heart sank. She could have sworn this was real, it was certainly the most realistic dream she had ever had. She clenched her fists.

“You idiot! What the hell are you talking about? You should be *here*. With me!” Ryuko said, the level of her voice rising even though its volume remained barely above a whisper. However, when Senketsu spoke she not only heard it, it was like she *felt* it.

“For a long time I felt the same way, Ryuko. I longed to be by your side once again, and it pained me so to be relegated to the status of but a memory. But I have come to the realization the I was created for a singular purpose: to help you defeat your mother, and through her the wiles of the life fibers. And now that that purpose has been fulfilled, it is time for us both to be reborn anew. Me in fire, and you...in love.”

Ryuko's face heated up, and she snorted in a poor attempt to cover for the truth.

“I don't know what you're talking about. Besides, you're not real, how can you know all this?” she said as she pushed some snow around with her foot.

“Ah, but I know, Ryuko. I know you better than anyone else, and there is no mistaking it. You are in love with the pink-haired girl! Just look at the way you fought Satsuki today: you pushed her to an absolute draw, and almost killed yourself in the process. I know you would not do this for just anything. You love her, Ryuko. And as a result, you now have something worth clinging to. It is time to let me go...”

As Senketsu finished his sentence, he began to dissipate, pieces of him fluttering up from Ryuko's body and disappearing into the ether.

“Senketsu, wait, please! You can't just show up and demand I let you go, I have so many questions still!” Ryuko pleaded as tears spilled from her eyes. She desperately grasped at the disappearing pieces of Senketsu, trying and failing to keep him together once again.

“It's time for me to go. Live your life, and continue to be happy. Open your heart to Jakazure, she is of good character and is worthy of your effort and love. Please move on from me, and do not forget your promise about clothing cuter than I. I love you, Ryuko. Goodbye.”

Ryuko's heart felt like it was going to burst as the dream world fell apart around her. She knew this was the last time she would ever see Senketsu, real or not, and as she felt herself being pulled back into the real world, she cried out one last time the name that had so often been on her lips:

“SENKETSU!”

Ryuko awoke panting and sobbing, the full brunt of her reliving the loss of Senketsu carried right back to the real world with her. She was immediately enveloped by a set of small arms, pulling her close to the other girl's body tightly. Ryuko could smell the sweet fragrance of

Nonon's coconut shampoo as she buried her face in her shoulder, giant tears spilling down her cheeks uninhibited. Ryuko resented herself for letting it get this bad, but right now all she wanted to do was be held by Nonon and forget about everything.

Nonon gently stroked Ryuko's hair until the sobbing subsided into muted panting. Nonon felt Ryuko's jaw clench before she raised her head, staring into Nonon's face. To her surprise, a look of pure anger cast a shadow over Ryuko's visage. She clenched her teeth in a grimace as she spoke.

“That...that fucking bastard. He just shows up and demands I let him go? Well, what the hell is supposed to happen if I'm not ready, damn it?! Just cause I love you-”

Ryuko's eyes widened as she realized what she had just said.

“I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said that and-”

Ryuko was cut off as Nonon placed a hand on her cheek and pulled her into a deep, passionate kiss. All of the worries Ryuko had at the moment seemed to characteristically vanish as she was filled with warmth. Every kiss made her feelings for Nonon that much stronger, and it was almost enough to ease the pain her body felt from the fight. Ryuko winced as one of her ribs pounded in pain.

Nonon pulled away from the kiss and smirked, pushing Ryuko gently back down onto the bed.

“Why don't you just shut up for right now, you idiot. You can profess your love for me after you've healed.”

Ryuko was about to make a retort when she heard someone clear their throat from the other side of the room, both her and Nonon turning to see who it was. Laying upright in the opposite bed, back ramrod straight against the headboard, was Satsuki. A small smile was on her lips, and it was clear that she had been awake for everything that had happened in the past few minutes. Ryuko's entire body tensed instinctively, until the pain made her relax her

muscles again. If there was ever any doubt as to the status of Nonon and Ryuko, it was no more. Satsuki had seen everything.

“Glad to see you're awake. Nonon, please give us a moment alone.” Satsuki said softly, clearly in a similar amount of pain to Ryuko but much more easily able to control it.

Nonon looked worriedly between Satsuki and Ryuko, and didn't make for the door until Ryuko gave her a nod of confidence. She quietly opened the door and slipped out of the room, briefly locking eyes with Ryuko one more time before closing it again.

By the time Ryuko heard the click of the door closing, Satsuki was already standing and slowly limping her way over to Ryuko's bed. He arm was in a sling and she was clearly in at least as much pain as Ryuko, but her face was as dignified and stone-hard as ever. She gently sat down on the edge of the bed next to her sister and sighed quietly, Ryuko's entire body tensing painfully the closer she approached. Satsuki noticed this and waved a hand of reassurance.

“Ryuko, the fight is over. I will not attack you, you are safe.”

Ryuko rolled her eyes, crossing her arms and looking away. “So you're back to calling me that now, huh...”

Satsuki stared down at the floor, and the two sisters sat in an awkward silence for several minutes. The only sound in the entire room was the regular ticking of a clock on the wall. Satsuki was the one to finally break the long pause, meeting Ryuko's gaze.

“She once promised, when we were very young, to never leave my side. She would 'hold my hand forever and ever', she said. Ever since then, we have been looking out for one another constantly. I hope you understand why I did all this, Ryuko.”

Fire burned in Ryuko's eyes. Her blood was still fired up from the fight, and while she was starting to see the whole picture, right now she wasn't about to let Satsuki get away with starting a legitimate fight to the death.

“Y'know what, Sats? Maybe I do. But honestly I'm a little busy right now thanking my lucky stars I'm not DEAD. I mean, why here? Why now? Do *you* love her, or something? Cause if that's the case then I-”

“No.”

Ryuko stopped dead in her tracks. There was just something about the way Satsuki said no that could get anyone to shut up.

“I do love Nonon, Ryuko. I have loved her since the day we first met, but not in the way you insinuate. Our love is not a romantic one, rather the love between two best friends. It is not dissimilar to the love between us as sisters, Ryuko.”

Ryuko snorted. “Yeah, well you could show it a little better-”

Satsuki shushed her and continued. “I had to know, Ryuko. It's why I did all this, why we almost killed each other, I *had* to know that you were serious. That you would protect her, with your life if need be. If this had turned out to be just a one-night fling between the two of you an she had ended up hurt, I would have never forgiven myself. For facilitating it, and for not being there to protect her. However-”

Satsuki looked back down her nose at Ryuko.

“-it is clear you have genuine feelings for Nonon, so it does not seem that I have to worry. When I told you the reason for our duel, the way I was acting...you didn't question it. Instead, you fought. For her and for the both of you. I had to know that you would protect her, and I now know that you will.”

With that, Satsuki smiled and placed a hand on Ryuko's shoulder. The contact surprised and startled her a bit, especially since such a short period of time ago their blades were at each others' throats. Ryuko managed a weak smile before Satsuki raised from the bed, beginning to slowly pace the room.

“Now-” she said authoritatively, “-if you will date Nonon there are several things you must know.”

“Oh god-” Ryuko said before Satsuki continued, unabated.

“Number one! Nonon's favorite food is traditional Chinese. I suggest that for your first date, you treat her to a meal at one of the many Chinese restaurants in your area of Tokyo. I can provide a list if you so require. Number two! Her favorite color is, obviously, pink. When wrapping gifts or picking out clothes for her, always remember this fact! Number three! Her favorite drink is a simple American rye whiskey, on the rocks. Depending on how volatile her mood is you might also think of trying bourbon. And finally!”

Satsuki whipped around and faced down Ryuko, despite her painful injuries. Light streamed through the window behind her, framing her as always in a soft yellow glow. Ryuko gulped, trying to take mental notes. She didn't want to take a chance of screwing these up later.

“Nonon is a natural blonde. Do not *ever*, under any circumstances mention this. Ever. She is incredibly sensitive about her hair color at all times, and if she ever asks you, you must immediately and without hesitation express your awe and love at it's incredible pink beauty. Do you understand?”

Ryuko nodded, cocking an eyebrow. That seemed like a pretty weird and specific thing to remember about her hair, but Satsuki seemed more serious about that than anything else so she figured it was important.

Sastuki took a deep breath and nodded curtly. “Right. You must continue to rest, I'll see about getting Soroi to bring you some tea and food.”

As Satsuki left through the cracked door, Ryuko's eyes easily closed again as she drifted in and out of semi-consciousness. What seemed like several hours later but was really only a short couple of minutes, Ryuko faintly heard the door open again and felt someone sit on the edge of the bed once again. She thought it might have been Satsuki again, but was too tired to even open her eyes and see. It wasn't until a small, soft hand brushed a strand of hair out of her face that she realized who it was.

Ryuko's eyes popped open instantly, smiling wide despite her condition. Nonon looked down at her and frowned, placing her hands awkwardly in her lap.

“Hey, princess.” Ryuko said quietly, staring. Nonon's frown deepened as she met Ryuko's gaze.

“How many times am I going to have to tell you to stop calling me that, you idiot?”

Ryuko's smile only grew bigger. “As long as it takes for you to not care anymore.”

Ryuko scooted away from Nonon and lifted her side of the covers, inviting Nonon to join her in the bed. Nonon sighed but obliged, laying down as Ryuko placed the warm covers over her small body. Contentment creeped into Nonon's features as Ryuko enveloped her in her arms, interlocking the fingers of one of her hands with Nonon's. Nonon's beautiful eyes locked with Ryuko's, and for a while they just stared into each others' eyes in silence.

“So..you and Satsuki, are you alright?” Nonon said timidly.

“Yeah, we're fine. We worked it out.” Ryuko responded, smiling softly.

“Good...” Nonon said, barely audible as she nestled her head below Ryuko's chin. Ryuko enjoyed the warmth of Nonon's body against her immensely. It was like coming home after a long time away. Comforting, sensual...the smell of her shampoo, the way her soft skin felt. It was something Ryuko hoped she would have forever and ever.

“Hey.” Ryuko said, kissing the top of Nonon's head gently.

“Hey.” She responded, looking up and meeting Ryuko's eyes as she smiled.

“Let's go on a date this week. I'll take you out, it'll be real classy and stuff.”

Nonon laughed, small and lilting. “I guess we do need to go on our first date. But you're buying, rich girl!”

Ryuko laughed with her, bumping her forehead into Nonon's playfully. “Alright, it'll be my treat you cheapskate.”

They continued to laugh for a few more seconds before resuming their cuddling, wordless but incredibly comforting for the both of them. They both drifted precariously towards sleep, and even as Ryuko moved further and further from consciousness she couldn't help but hear two figures walking by the door to the bedroom speaking quietly. One of them was obviously Satsuki, and the other had a familiar voice as well.

Ryuko's sleepy brain took a while to recognize that voice as belonging to one Uzu Sanageyama. She immediately snapped back to right before her and Satsuki's fight when they were sparring. That look Satsuki had given him...

Ryuko's thoughts were banished by the sound of their conversation right outside the door. Satsuki spoke first.

“The plan worked, she proved herself to me and I am now confident in her ability to date Nonon. I trust you can keep this under wraps until they are ready to tell the others?”

“Of course, Satsuki-sama. Your plans are as clever as always.”

“Good. And, Uzu...please just call me Satsuki. It feels strange for you to call me Satsuki-sama after all that's happened.”

“Oh! Um, of course S-Satsuki.”

Ryuko barely heard Satsuki uncharacteristically giggle, but she heard it nonetheless and as she heard their footsteps recede down the hall she couldn't help but remark on how...un-formal Satsuki had been with Saageyama. They seemed quite familiar with each other, and now that Ryuko thought about it that look she had given him after their sparring match earlier had seemed a bit odd as well...

Sleep tugged at the coherence of her thoughts, and she dropped the matter, at least for now. It must've been a momentary lapse in Satsuki's armor, a screw-up, nothing more. Right now all Ryuko wanted to focus on anyways was the tiny, beautiful pink-haired girl in her arms. She could worry about her sister and that monkey later.

It was probably nothing.

Revelations

Chapter Notes

> Here comes some self-indulgence, followed by some intrigue, followed by extreme sappiness. Some mature content follows, as always reader discretion is advised. And as always, enjoy!

The following weeks were fairly uneventful, given what had preceded them. Nonon and Ryuko had gone on several dates since the weekend of the party and subsequent events, all of which had gone swimmingly. Ryuko had decided to heed Satsuki's advice about Nonon's tastes, and as a result she had for their first date taken Nonon to an upscale Chinese restaurant in Roppongi, followed by drinks at a small hole in the wall jazz club near Ryuko and Mako's residence in Minato City. An interesting moment in the night came when the sitting pianist of the club recognized Nonon sitting at the bar and demanded she sit in and play a couple songs with the band. He was apparently a former member of the jazz club at Honnouji academy, and had even studied under Nonon in several club meetings.

“Well, ladies and gentlemen I am thrilled to offer you a rare treat. We are graced tonight by the presence of none other than Nonon Jakazure, former head of Honnouji academy non-athletic affairs and my former club superior!”

The swarthy, tall jazz musician stood and bowed deeply as the spotlight swiveled to bathe Nonon in it's light. He couldn't have been more than eighteen, yet the man up on stage carried himself with the air of an experienced professional. Nonon, however, was behaving like anything but.

She shrank away from the light, barely managing a polite smile and trying to decline through an already descending haze of alcohol surging through her system. Ryuko sat next to her at the bar, laughing hysterically and drunkenly banging her fist on the bar top. Sensing Nonon's hesitation, Ryuko encouraged her by wrapping an arm around her shoulders.

“C'mon, Nonon. Just play a couple songs like you did for me our first night together. Please?”

Nonon sighed and rolled her eyes, before downing the rest of her drink and hopping down from the barstool. She took Ryuko's face in both her hands, quickly giving her a deep, romantic and (slightly) drunk kiss.

“Alright, just a couple. But you're gonna pay me back for this, baka.”

Ryuko joined the rest of the club in cheering and clapping while Nonon made her way to the stage, her confidence increasing dramatically the closer she got to the pristine baby grand piano situated there. She bowed before her student, before he turned the floor over to her and the band for several songs. As they played, Ryuko looked on in awe at how much Nonon was in her element. Despite her initial hesitation, she was playing the piano and the crowd with equal skill, delighting both Ryuko and everyone else with her inventive chord structures and incredible improv skills.

Ryuko nursed her drink, engrossed in her girlfriend's performance. Is that was Nonon was, her girlfriend? It was odd to put a label on things so early, but Ryuko supposed she could be forgiven for thinking in such a way right now. Her feelings for Nonon grew every day they spent together, and it seemed that the same was true for Nonon. Despite how cold and hostile she might seem at times, Ryuko now easily saw through the facade to the warm heart and good humor inside.

The only hitch in the night came when the two girls were walking home, the sky opening up and a torrent of rain falling down upon them. They sprinted the rest of the way to Ryuko's apartment building, entering through the garage and fussing over how soaking wet they had become. Perhaps out of slight misery from the cold, and perhaps because of their drunkenness, the two burst out in loud, raucous laughter when they found themselves alone in the elevator, dripping. This went on for several seconds until Ryuko stopped and gazed at Nonon, a look on her face that Nonon had not yet seen. It was a strange mix of confidence and seduction, and Nonon had to admit that it appealed to her very much.

They threw themselves at each other, the water logging their clothes bothering them no longer. They kissed passionately and deeply, their tongues dancing around in each others' mouths. As they moved from the elevator and into Ryuko's vacant apartment, the wet clothes were a problem no more as each article of soaked clothing was stripped off one by one, falling in small piles on the floor.

In the darkness of Ryuko's bedroom, the entire world was limited again to the soft feeling of their bodies pressed against each other, the feeling of their warm mouths locked in an undying embrace, the feeling of one of Nonon's small hands on Ryuko's breast, the sensation of Ryuko's hand moving from the small of Nonon's back down to grope drunkenly at a shapely buttock.

Nonon was surprised by Ryuko's directness this time around, taking the role of the dominant lover. Ryuko flipped Nonon onto her back, straddling her and moving Nonon's hands so that they were above her head and could not interfere. Ryuko could hear Nonon's breath quicken as she moved the workings of her mouth down from Nonon's neck to her collarbone, then finally to her breasts. Ryuko took one of the firm mounds in her hand as her mouth worked on the opposite nipple in equal measure, enveloping it and pulling her head upwards, making a popping sound as it came loose from the suction of her mouth. She circled it with her tongue, Nonon letting out uninhibited sounds of pleasure as Ryuko used her hand to massage her other breast.

Luckily there was no one around to hear Nonon's loud, high-pitched moans as Ryuko kissed down her flat, soft stomach towards her final destination. Ryuko was predictably nervous: she had never done this particular act she was about to try, especially not on one as attractive as Nonon. But, ever since their initial encounter, she had been online almost constantly in her free time in order to research how to perform acts of an...oral nature to their fullest potential. Ryuko was now fully confident in her ability, and was ready to give it a go.

Ryuko got to work, Nonon's instant reaction a sign of her initial success. Nonon's body writhed under her, Ryuko gently but firmly placing one hand over the smaller girl's stomach to steady her as she worked.

“Augh god, R-Ryuko...” Nonon managed breathily between moans.

She looked down between her legs briefly, where Ryuko's steely and seductive gaze met her own. Ryuko's piercing blue-grey eyes (remarkably similar to Satsuki's, only darker) penetrated the darkness, in addition to the soft glow of the bundle of bright red life fibers sprouting as part of Ryuko's thick head of hair.

Ryuko entered Nonon with a finger, then two. Nonon threw her head back in ecstasy, burying a hand in Ryuko's hair as her mouth continued to work. The explosion of pleasure that was Nonon's first climax racked her entire body, Nonon crying out in variations between high-

pitched screams and breathy moans, breathing heavily. She was covered in a slick mixture of rain water and sweat already, and Ryuko was only getting started.

Following in Nonon's footsteps from their first encounter, Ryuko brought Nonon aggressively to one, two, three climaxes before Nonon could no longer take any more. After the final time, Ryuko gently returned to Nonon's side in Ryuko's bed and held her until she was done panting.

“H-holy shit, where did you learn all that?” Nonon managed.

Ryuko smirked, pleased with herself. “Well...to be honest, I learned a lot watching you the other night. The rest...I had some help from the internet.”

Nonon laughed as heartily as she could manage. “You are so dumb, transfer student. You're dumb and sexy, and I'm drunk and sexy. We're both drunk and sexy, but you're dumb too. Ugh, I'm tired...”

Nonon buried her face in Ryuko's ample bosom, Ryuko snorting in amusement. “We're even now, princess.” She said confidently.

Ryuko yelped as Nonon suddenly wrapped her mouth around one of Ryuko's nipples, twirling her tongue deftly around it before popping it out of her mouth and smiling devilishly, meeting Ryuko's surprised gaze with her own.

“After next time, you're gonna owe me two.”

Ryuko smiled back at Nonon in equal measure, before kissing her deeply, biting Nonon's lower lip as she pulled away.

“You're on, princess.”

As stated previously, it had been several weeks now since Nonon and Ryuko's first date. The weather was beginning to get colder as autumn began to turn into winter, the air in Tokyo crisp, dry and cool. The sharp-rayed midday sun shone down on Ryuko through the windshield of her Ferrari as she sped through the streets of inner-city Toyko, making her way gradually towards Nonon's place of residence. Ryuko had agreed to meet her at her apartment in order to walk somewhere in the area to get something to eat. Nonon lived in Roppongi, a bustling and very fashionable area of Tokyo that was practically filled to the brim with good shopping and delicious food. Ryuko's mouth watered just thinking about their possibilities.

Ryuko shot Nonon a quick text when she was close, and as she swung the pristine sport sedan into a free parking spot on the uncharacteristically wide avenue in front of Nonon's building, she saw the pink-haired princess herself emerge from the lobby, looking positively adorable. Ryuko admired her from afar as she exited her car, Nonon approaching. She was wearing a dark green peacoat, black leggings and tall winter boots. Around her neck was a multicolored striped scarf, and her hair was actually down for once, the top of her head covered with one of her typical beanies, this one black with a skull and crossbones on the forehead.

Ryuko had opted for slightly less fashionable attire, with a simple black zip-up hoodie and dark red skinny jeans. On her feet were her usual red and black basketball shoes, somewhat worn now from daily use. The two girls embraced wordlessly as they met, relishing for a while in how comfortable and warm it felt to be wrapped around each other in so many layers. Finally, they broke and Ryuko leaned down to place a small kiss on Nonon's lips, smiling. Nonon smirked back at her, and forcefully grabbed Ryuko's hand as they began to walk aimlessly in search of food.

“Hey, have you heard from Satsuki lately?” Ryuko asked casually.

“No, actually. I was going to ask you the same thing. It's not like her to stay out of contact for more than a couple of days. Hmph.” Nonon receded deep into concentration.

“I mean, it's probably nothing. She *is* the head of the world's largest clothing company and all. I'm sure she's just busy.” Ryuko returned, trying to placate Nonon.

Nonon looked up at Ryuko and frowned. “Yeah, I guess...”

The two walked hand in hand for a half hour, through the winding and hilly streets of Roppongi. They passed many restaurants, all of which Ryuko suggested and Nonon fussily turned down. Her tastes in food were almost as particular as her tastes in music, Ryuko thought. Occasionally one of them would see something displayed in the window of a shop and they would stop to examine it for a while. They were both hungry but clearly in no hurry to get anywhere in particular, content in just sharing in each others' company even though neither of them would acknowledge it directly.

They walked for a while longer until Ryuko spotted a small european-style cafe with outdoor tables that piqued her interest.

“Hey, why don't we try-” She trailed off when she realized that Nonon was not by her side any longer, having stopped about five feet previous looking like she had seen a ghost.

“Oh. My. GOD.” She squeaked as Ryuko returned to her side, bewildered.

“What's up? Why do you look so freaked out?”

Nonon didn't answer, Ryuko instead choosing to follow her gaze to see what was vexing her so. Her focus fell on a table about fifty feet away from them, outside of the cafe Ryuko had just asked about. There was a man and a woman sitting at the table, the woman sitting towards them with the man's back to the two girls. It took Ryuko longer than it should have to realize that the woman sitting there was her sister, Satsuki. She was smiling, despite her sharp features and ramrod-straight posture. Ryuko's entire body tensed when she realized that Satsuki's hand, sitting on the tabletop, was covered by the hand of the man sitting opposite her.

It was only when they leaned across the table to give each other a small kiss that Ryuko realized who the man was. The long coat, the broad muscular shoulders, the dark green head of messy hair, and the trademark smirk that Ryuko saw when he turned his head slightly...this could only be one person.

Uzu Sanageyama.

“H-holy shit-” was all Ryuko managed before Nonon grabbed her hand and pulled her into a nearby alley, slamming her a bit too forcefully against a wall. Nonon's hands gripped Ryuko's upper arms, her eyes glaring into Ryuko's with a fire she had only seen few times before.

“Tell me I didn't see what I just saw.” Nonon said through clenched teeth, her fingers digging into Ryuko's arms.

“I-I don't know, was that Sanageyama? What the hell are they doing?” Ryuko stammered.

Nonon's hands slipped from Ryuko's arms to land lazily at her side. She stared at the ground.

“That monkey kissed her. He kissed Satsuki-chan.” Nonon looked back up at Ryuko, this time a look of defeat on her face. “What the hell is going on?”

“I dunno. This is really weird.” Ryuko returned, shaking her head.

Suddenly a thought burst its way into Ryuko's head. “Hey, I have an idea.” She said, taking Nonon's worried face in her hands. “Let's spy on 'em!”

Nonon frowned. “That is a really dumb idea, transfer student. What if they see us?”

“They won't, cause we're gonna disguise ourselves. You'd be surprised what just a little change does to prevent people from recognizing you.” Ryuko said, now beaming down at Nonon.

Nonon snorted, amused at Ryuko's enthusiasm. “This is so dumb...” She said as she began to tuck her bright pink hair up into her beanie, pulling it down so none of her signature locks could be seen.

Ryuko followed suit, pulling her hair back and making sure that her life fiber strand was layered underneath the rest of her hair so it couldn't be seen at all. When it was all said and done both of them had subtly transformed themselves so that they could not be immediately picked out of a crowd as Ryuko Matoi and Nonon Jakazure.

Nonon placed her hands on her hips, looking Ryuko up and down. “Alright, looks good. Now, I'm not doing this on an empty stomach so if we're going to skip a real lunch in favor of tailing Satsuki-chan and the monkey, I'm going to need some food. Run across the street to that takoyaki stand, I'll wait here and keep an eye on 'em.”

Ryuko clicked her heels together and snapped off a mock salute. “Yes ma'am, princess Nonon!” She said before beginning to stealthily make her way across the small avenue to the stand on the far side.

Nonon slowly approached the edge of the alley, peering around the corner back at where the “couple” were seated. Perhaps it was a mistake? Maybe both her and Ryuko had somehow imagined seeing it. Them holding hands...them *kissing*...there was just no way. Nonon shuddered just at the thought of it. As she peered around the corner back to where the two were sitting however, all doubts she could have had were instantly smashed.

Satsuki and Sanageyama were deep in conversation, their hands still touching across the small table. There was no doubt about it, they were at least *acting* like an item. But if that were so, then why the hell hadn't Satsuki-chan told her? Or at least told Ryuko? If her own sister didn't know, then there was definitely more going on here than meets the eye. Nonon was so deep in concentration watching the two from afar, she didn't notice that Ryuko had returned from the food stand bearing gifts.

“Hey, eat this-” Ryuko touched Nonon's shoulder and she jumped, whirling around and frowning. Her face softened as she came out of her deep concentration.

“Oh. Thanks...” She said, chewing on the soft ball of fried dough and octopus and looking down deep in thought. She was clearly worried and confused by this new revelation.

“Hey, don't worry. We'll get to the bottom of this one way or another. She's gotta have a good reason for leaving her sister and her best friend out of the loop like this right?” Ryuko said, trying to reassure Nonon despite her own massive confusion and frustration at the situation.

There was definitely something fishy going on here...at the very least it was kind of a weird choice for Satsuki. Sanageyama was a bit brash and hotheaded for someone so cold and calculating as Satsuki, although Ryuko supposed she could see how their personalities could complement each other. And to be fair, Ryuko and Nonon hadn't come out to the rest of their friends group yet either. But Sanageyama and Satsuki were the only ones that knew about them, so why hadn't Satsuki at least done Nonon and her the courtesy of returning the favor? It was all very strange and a bit offputting.

There's was no time to think now, though. Nonon was grabbing Ryuko's hand and dragging her out into the crowded thoroughfare, the two of them blending into the crowd. Satsuki and Uzu had payed their bill and were now strolling ahead of Nonon and Ryuko by about thirty feet.

Ryuko glanced at Nonon, seeing only a look of hardened determination on her face. Despite her hesitation before, she was clearly falling headfirst into the spy mindset, determined on finding out the reason as to why Satsuki had kept them completely out of the loop. Ryuko needed this as well. There had to be a good reason for Satsuki to have not told even her own sister.

Right?

They tailed Satsuki and Sanageyama for the rest of the day, following them down crowded thoroughfares, across foot bridges and dodging their gaze in busy shops. It was a strange sort of bonding experience for Nonon and Ryuko, their non-verbal communication becoming better and better as necessity demanded it.

As the sun began to set, Nonon and Ryuko shared a knowing glance, both wondering how far this little cat and mouse game would go. When would they part ways for the night? Would they at all? What were they even doing in the first place? The two only had a split-second to wonder however, as Satsuki and Sanageyama abruptly turned into an alley ahead of them.

“I don't like the look of this.” Nonon said warily, increasing her pace. Ryuko matched her stride and the two fast approached the mouth of the alley.

When they reached the beginning of the small alley, Ryuko and Nonon's shoulders slumped. There was no sign of Satsuki or Sanageyama.

“Shit! Do you think they were onto us?” Ryuko said as she began to let her hair down, sensing that their game had fallen apart. Nonon followed suit, angrily ripping the beanie from her head and clenching it in one balled fist.

“Probably. Satsuki-chan is as sharp as they come, and despite how *dumb* that northern Kanto monkey is I wouldn't put it past him either. We probably got sloppy and they hightailed it outta here. Damn...” Nonon was tense, probably the most tense Ryuko had ever seen her in recent memory.

Ryuko moved to be by her side. “It's just so...weird. Satsuki and Sanageyama? It doesn't seem like it would work, and yet they were walkin' around all day today like the happiest couple on the planet. As weird as it sounds for me to say this about Satsuki, I think they were on a 'date'.”

They both shivered slightly at the strangeness of that statement, especially because they hadn't seen any evidence to the contrary. They had modestly held hands, even kissed each other. It was definitely not a friendly outing, that was for sure. Ryuko thought about it for a bit longer, only stopping when her stomach rumbled. The only thing she had had to eat all day were those takoyaki earlier, and she needed some real food soon. She wrapped an arm around Nonon's waist, managing a small smile.

“Hey, I'm *really* hungry and it's pretty clear we ain't spyin' on anyone else tonight. Let's go get some food, yeah?”

Nonon's ears perked up at the prospect of getting food, and she nodded her head hurriedly in agreement.

After about five minutes of walking, they selected a small out of the way ramen shop to eat their fill and mull over things. Nonon was too tired and too hungry to be picky, and Ryuko relished that fact as they both sat down at the bar seats at the window facing the street,

settling into their own hearty bowls of noodles. They each deftly separated their chopsticks, slapping their hands together in unison and uttering a quiet “itadakimasu” before tucking in.

For a while it was utterly silent, the sun having almost completely set and the street outdoors bathed in the light of the waning sun, mixed with a combination of newly-lit streetlamps and the harsh, colorful light of several neon signs. Nonon and Ryuko were the only two customers in the shop, and the only sound that could be heard was the occasional noise from outside mixed with the slurping of their noodles.

They each had a lot to think about. For Ryuko, it was finding out that her sister was dating someone that she *knew*, and yet for some reason had not told her yet. While this might seem bad, Nonon's predicament had much more historical context. This was her *best friend*, Satsuki-chan, and she was dating this...uncouth, loud-mouthed monkey who was not at all the right person for her! And at the very least, Satsuki hadn't told either of them, and there was something about that that frustrated the both of them.

Ryuko finished her bowl before Nonon, drinking the broth before placing her pair of chopsticks across the top of the bowl. She leaned back on her stool, unzipping her jacket a bit now that they were inside and propping her arms up on the chair back. She sat there for several minutes while Nonon finished her ramen, neither of them saying a word and Ryuko resolving to just sip the Sapporo she had ordered peacefully. Finally, Nonon drank her broth and set her chopsticks on her bowl as well, taking a swig from her canned fruit drink before placing her hands in her lap. She turned her head and stared into Ryuko's face, her features almost completely blank. Ryuko cocked a curious eyebrow.

“Do you think they've...like...done it?” Nonon asked quietly.

Ryuko didn't quite get what she meant at first. “What do you mean 'done it'? Like kissed, or something? We already saw-” Ryuko's eyes grew wide as her tired brain finally clicked.

“Ew, gross! C'mon, don't make me think of that stuff. That's my sister you're talking about.” Ryuko frowned at Nonon.

“And it's *my* best friend. How do you think I feel? This is just all too weird. Like, why would Satsuki-chan not tell us? Is she ashamed or something? I mean I guess I can see why she

wouldn't just because of the reaction I'm having to it right now, but Satsuki-chan's not one to shrink away from conflict. Ugh...” Nonon frowned deeply and looked away.

“Hey look, I'm sure she had a good reason. She probably just wants to wait until they're both ready, right? Be honest, would either of us have rushed out to tell the world that we were dating when we started all this?” Ryuko said, placing a hand on Nonon's shoulder. Nonon locked eyes with Ryuko for a split-second before pouting and turning away again.

“I guess not, no. This is just all such a shock, I wish we hadn't found out this way...”

Ryuko hated seeing her like this. She was tense, conflicted. It was clear she was taking this much worse than Ryuko, and Ryuko had to do something to distract her before she descended even further into this bad attitude as she was wont to do. Ryuko gently tipped Nonon's chin up, smiling wide. She had a plan.

“Hey, tell ya what princess. I'll get us some beers, and we can go back to your place and get drunk and I'll show you one of these crappy American movies I've been telling you so much about. Maybe we can even cuddle or some romantic bullshit like that, but only if you stop pouting. This is not the end of the world.”

Nonon looked surprised for a short time. Ryuko knew that despite their current relationship, Nonon still had to get used to Ryuko genuinely being kind to her. Their relationship up until a couple of weeks ago had been fairly tense and filled with shit-talking and name-calling, so it was understandable. Nonon came out of her surprise and resolved to wrap her arms around Ryuko's waist, locking her into a tight hug with her head pressed to Ryuko's chest.

“Thanks.” She said, so quiet that Ryuko almost didn't hear it.

Ryuko smiled, planting a small kiss on the top of Nonon's head.

“You're welcome, princess.” Ryuko returned just as quietly.

This time, Ryuko was surprised to hear no reprimand from Nonon. Only a small hum of contentment and an even smaller smile. Ryuko smiled as well.

She was coming around to the nickname.

Comfort was the only word that came to mind.

Ryuko and Nonon had, as planned, retired to Nonon's place of residence and were thoroughly enjoying their decision. The weather had become quite cold since the sun receded below the horizon, and the streets of Tokyo were windswept and somewhat hostile as they made the long walk back to Nonon's cavernous studio-style apartment, situated near the top of a stylish new apartment building in Roppongi Hills. They had kept most of their winter clothes on upon arriving, knowing that it would take some time for the heat to fully kick in.

Several beers each were consumed while they had settled into a comfortable position on the couch, one of Ryuko's eclectic American movies playing on the large flat-screen TV. It was “Leon, the Professional”, a cerebral and compelling film with an even more compelling soundtrack. The two were transfixed, comfortable beyond all reason after the long day they had had, and were letting all of their troubles float away into the ether as a soft snow began to fall outside the floor to ceiling glass windows looking out onto the balcony. Ryuko could not help but smile.

As she downed the last of her third beer, Ryuko placed the empty bottle on the coffee table along with the rest and settled back into her seat, her muscles relaxing more than they had in a long time. Nonon nuzzled her head in the crook between Ryuko's neck and shoulder, her soft breaths playing out on the exposed skin there. Ryuko smiled softly, wrapping an arm around Nonon, using her other hand to slowly stroke her soft and fragrant hair. They lay there for several minutes, focused on the movie, before Nonon moved her head slightly to angle her face towards Ryuko's.

Their eyes met, wordlessly staring into the depths of each others' bright eyes as they reflected the light of the television. Nonon's bright pink eyes were, as usual, dancing with emotion and a sense of frivolity, while Ryuko's were (though it might not be through her own choice) somewhat cold and composed, but nonetheless piercing and beautiful in their own way.

Ryuko placed a hand softly on Nonon's cheek, bending her neck downwards to allow their lips to meet.

They kissed like this, again and again, until Nonon shifted herself to be level with Ryuko, one of her legs winding across Ryuko's lap. They continued kissing more and more passionately, Nonon placing one hand in Ryuko's thick hair. Ryuko's hands tended to be more the wandering type, moving from Nonon's slender neck to her face, her soft pink hair down to one of her hips. This was one of Ryuko's favorite spots to hold, her fingers dancing under Nonon's shirt and grasping softly at the soft, warm skin of her hip. Their hands danced over one another even more, grasping hips, burying themselves in hair, even grasping at the occasional breast through their clothes to the surprise and delight of the recipient.

They continued like this for over half the movie, only stopping to catch their breath before they dove back into one another once again. Ryuko moved to nip at Nonon's ear drunkenly, whispering gently into it once she was done having her fun.

“Hey, princess. There's something I kinda wanna tell ya.” She muttered between nips.

“Mmm?” was all the response Nonon could manage at the time. Her ears were somewhat of an erogenous zone.

“Eh...on second thought, never mind.” Ryuko said, half-playfully.

“Oh no no, you're not getting off that easy, transfer. Tell me this instant.” Nonon said, quietly but forcefully.

Ryuko blushed slightly, genuinely surprised by Nonon's forceful response. The alcohol in her system quickly negated any doubts.

“Well, this might seem a bit soon...but, uh...well, truth is I think I might kinda *love* you, princess.” Ryuko stammered.

To Ryuko's growing surprise, Nonon burst into a loud and high-pitched laugh, her body twitching with the wracking laughter. Ryuko reared back, frowning.

“What the hell's so funny?! I'm over here professing my goddamn love for you and you're laughing?” Ryuko managed.

When Nonon was able to calm down enough, she took Ryuko's face in both her hands and gave her a deep, passionate kiss that caught Ryuko even more off guard.

“I love you too, you idiot. I thought you knew that! I'm glad you said it though. I'm glad *we* said it, and managed to do it while kinda drunk. I love you, and I think I've loved you for a long time.”

Ryuko was floored despite her innate knowledge of the situation. She supposed that the whole basis of their relationship was Nonon's love for her, but hearing her actually say it (especially given her very deflecting and jarring personality) was strangely wonderful. Ryuko pressed her forehead to Nonon's, grinning from ear to ear.

“I'm glad, Nonon.” Ryuko said, staring deep into Nonon's eyes.

Nonon managed a completely genuine smile. “Me too, Ryuko.”

Their hearts swelled at how genuine this moment was. They loved each other, and they had each used their real names without some joke or mock-insult to deflect from how they truly felt. It was a momentous occasion, they supposed. They fell back into one another, kissing and embracing each other as the movie ended.

Nonon demanded that Ryuko play another film, and as Ryuko made another selection and played it, they settled back into the same routine for several more hours. They held each other in complete, wordless bliss into the wee hours of the morning, all thoughts of stress and strife from the days' events completely absent from their minds.

Eventually, the warmth and comfort of their bodies pressed against one another, clothed in cozy warm winter's clothes, was too much for either of them, and they slowly drifted off to sleep. That night Ryuko would have the same dream that she had had so many nights before: a pure white landscape, blanketed in snow, a small unused shrine the only distinguishing factor in the entire landscape. In the morning, Ryuko would not wake up screaming. She would not relive losing a friend like she had so many other nights. Instead, in this cold and unforgiving landscape, she would turn to see a short girl with pink hair, smiling and reaching out a hand to her.

Revelations Pt. 2

Chapter Notes

> Satsuki x Sanageyama's side of the previous chapter. Mature content follows, reader discretion is advised. As always, enjoy!

It was almost unfathomable to think that the confident, cold and calculating Satsuki Kiryuin could be made nervous by such a trivial thing. She had conquered entire cities, thousands of people had once bended knee and swore fealty to her at the threat of absolute destruction at her hands. Yet, here she was, striding purposefully down a bustling thoroughfare in Roppongi hills, the cool air of the fall day whipping her bobbed hair to and fro, and her heart racing within her chest. She scolded herself internally, not only for letting something like this get to her, but more so because the event she was marching towards was something so many people wholly unlike her had participated in without anything but happiness and excitement on their mind: it was a date.

Not only was it any date either; it was her first real date with someone she had known and held affection for for countless years, only in recent months to realize that that affection stretched beyond the boundaries of friendship: Uzu Sanageyama. One of her Elite Four, and one of her oldest friends. They had always had somewhat of a different relationship than the other three; somewhat playful, even flirtatious at times. Looking back on it all now it was easy to see that they had been interested in each other, the only thing stopping them from acting on their desires being...well, about a million and one different things. But now that her awful mother had been defeated and they had entered the “happily ever after” phase of their collective story, it had not taken long for Satsuki and Uzu to begin to explore such long-held feelings.

It had begun tamely enough: a friendly embrace that had lasted just a little too long, eye contact from across a crowded room that was anything but *just* friendly. But the real festivities had kicked off after Ryuko and Satsuki had their fight which resulted in both of them being bedridden at Kiryuin manor for the remainder of the weekend. Uzu had been in on Satsuki's plan from the get-go, and had been instructed to meet Satsuki outside of the room they were put up in after the fight was over, and when Sastuki had recovered enough. That Satsuki had been able to predict not only the outcome of the fight but also the details down to which room they would be in spoke to her genius and planning, at least in Uzu's eyes. Though at this point no one should have been surprised by Satsuki's strategic ability.

After a brief exchange, Satsuki had forcefully taken Uzu's hand in hers, pulling him in the direction of her room. She opened her door at the end of the hall, inviting him to enter first before she followed, closing the door behind her quietly. Uzu stood sheepishly in the center of the room, only a few times before ever having entered such a personal area of Satsuki's. It felt only a little wrong. Satsuki offered him a seat, pouring them both tea from the fresh kettle and setting herself down on the edge of the bed. For a while they sat in tense silence, sipping their tea, Uzu looking uncomfortable while Satsuki looked almost bemused. Satsuki finally broke the silence by placing her empty tea cup on its saucer, placing the both on the bed next to her and crossing one leg over the other.

“Well, is there something you wanted to ask me, Uzu?” She said expectantly.

Uzu rubbed the back of his neck sheepishly, blood rushing to his face. “Well, erm...S-Satsuki-sama-I mean Satsuki!” He stammered.

Satsuki snorted in amusement as he floundered. Uzu finally trailed off for a split second, before closing his eyes and taking a deep breath, steeling himself. He rose suddenly and intently, his burning gaze piercing her cold blue eyes, surprising the both of them. When he spoke it was a thunderous battle cry, almost a little too loud for the room they were in.

“Satsuki! I was wondering if you'd like to go on a date with me?!” He boomed, staring her down even after the sound of his voice had long been gone from the room.

Satsuki's eyes widened for a split second, before smiling and rising from her perch on the bed. She deftly crossed the space between them, placing a hand softly on Uzu's cheek and looking deeply into his burning eyes. His face flushed further and his arms fell to his sides as Satsuki craned her neck ever slightly to plant a small but meaningful kiss on his lips, pulling back away after a couple seconds and continuing to smile.

“I thought you'd never ask.”

A wide grin was all Uzu could manage.

“I have to admit, I'm a bit nervous.” Uzu said quietly after greeting Satsuki.

That made her feel better, not only knowing that Uzu was also nervous about their little encounter, but also the knowledge that he had taken the first leap in addressing it. It would make it that much easier for Satsuki to admit it herself.

They had greeted each other and sat down at their table, nestled among several other tables at a curbside European-style cafe situated on a busy thoroughfare in Roppongi hills. It was a cool day, but certainly not cold enough for Satsuki or Sanageyama to notice much. They had each faced down a much tougher winter around the first time they had met, in the barren plains of Northern Kanto. Satsuki remembered facing the young, arrogant boy and his gang down, the fields and rolling hills stretching out around them covered in snow. Even with her vast strategic knowledge and ability to predict future events, she could have never foreseen what was currently happening, however. Satsuki shook her head slightly, clearing these thoughts from her mind. Now was not the time to be slipping into solipsism.

“How have you been, Uzu? I feel like I haven't seen you since the weekend of the party.” Satsuki asked, tucking a stray strand of hair behind her ear. Uzu gave off a small laugh, partly from nerves. He was still acclimatizing to Satsuki calling him by his first name.

“That's because you haven't, Satsuki. To be honest, I've been throwing myself into my work at the school. Training the students is the best way to pass the time, and since you've been so busy with your work reconstructing REVOCS I knew it would be a while before *this* would happen.” He smiled, ending the sentence by gesturing nonchalantly at the table as if to punctuate their situation. Satsuki's view fell.

“I'm...sorry about all that, Uzu. We both tend to throw ourselves into our work, and unfortunately sometimes I let it get the better of me. However, it will be a problem no longer. I have adjusted my habits so that I may now give more time to my personal life, and that means *this*.” Satsuki gestured absentmindedly in the same way Uzu had just a moment ago.

“I must admit when you finally asked me on this date, it had been a long time coming. ” She said with a small smile, meeting his eyes. They were almost sparkling, and he was smiling with a joviality that was such a feature of his personality.

Satsuki absentmindedly laid her hand on the table in front of her, and Uzu, still smiling, placed his hand on top of hers. Satsuki flushed, unused to even this level of affection, but still managed a small smile as she diverted her gaze from his eyes.

“I'm just glad you said yes, Satsuki-sama.”

Satsuki frowned. “I thought I told you not to call me that, Uzu.”

This time it was Sanageyama's turn to flush, wrenching his hand away to rub at the back of his neck and laugh nervously. “Haha! Force of habit, I guess!”

Satsuki snorted in amusement and began to look at the menu, when she saw a curious look come over Sanageyama's face, his neck craning as if to try to see something off in the distance.

“Hey, isn't that-”

Satsuki whipped her head around but didn't quite catch anything of notice. She turned back to Uzu with a puzzled look on her face. “What was it? What did you see?”

“Hm...I thought I saw...ah, nothing I guess.” Uzu said, smiling sheepishly.

They both soon forgot about the phantom sighting, ordering their lunch and bonding over thoughtful conversation about nothing in particular. The autumn sun shone down on them, lighting everything around them in a yellow glow, beginning to take on the dreamlike, dry quality that winter days so often do. What Uzu didn't tell Satsuki and soon forgot about, however, was that the phantom sighting he had had earlier looked remarkably like two people that they were both quite familiar with. Uzu wouldn't have normally thought twice about two girls walking down the street in this city holding hands, but not every girl in this city had pink hair, and even fewer (one might imagine) would be with another girl with a bright red streak in *her* hair.

As they paid their bill and got up from their table, Uzu and Satsuki were well into their date and distracted enough that neither of them were as fully aware of their surroundings. As such, Satsuki barely took notice of the two girls in the corner of her eye exiting an alleyway near the cafe they were leaving. Curious, Satsuki looked toward the mouth of the alleyway as her and Uzu began walking away from the cafe, seeing nothing but the usual throng of people bustling about on the walk. She shook her head for the second time today, resolving that it was just her mind playing tricks on her. There was no way Nonon and Ryuko would be this close and not come say hello. Satsuki turned her gaze back to the man whose hand was entwined with her own, his green hair blowing in the cool autumn breeze as they walked. As Uzu kissed her, all thoughts fell from Satsuki's mind like leaves in the wind.

It was nothing.

By all accounts, it was a normal day. Everything that should have been done on a date was done: shopping, eating, strolling through the park, all the stereotypes. And yet there was something slightly off about the whole affair. As if eyes were on the two the whole time. It wasn't surprising, all things considered. Satsuki had decided to let the relationship between Uzu and her blossom more before she told anyone about it, especially Ryuko and Nonon. As a result of this, she was always cautious about what she was saying and doing lest she betray her secret pairing with the green-haired Kendo master. Be that as it may, there was something more...significant about this feeling. As if they were literally being watched, and it was clear that they both felt it. The sun was beginning to set on Tokyo, and as they left a store Satsuki was the first to address this feeling.

“Uzu, I have a strange feeling. Like we're being watched. Do you sense it as well? My intuition is rarely wrong.” She said, careful not to telegraph to their pursuers that the two were on to them.

Uzu nodded resolutely. “I sense it too. I've felt it since we were back at the cafe, but I just chalked it up to general paranoia. What shall we do?”

Satsuki thought quickly. The sun was setting, so if they were to be ambushed night would be the perfect time to do it. Their best chance was to find a place to hide from their pursuers

quickly and determine their identity, and their intentions, while there was still some light (and relative safety) left. A blind alley coming up on their right provided the perfect opportunity.

“Uzu, there. We'll enter the alley and find somewhere to hide. Our pursuers will undoubtedly follow us in, and when they do we can discover their identities.” Satsuki gestured at the alley ever so slightly with a nod of her head, and Uzu nodded in agreement.

“Right. I'm ready.” Uzu hissed, his grip on Satsuki's hand tightening. Satsuki was glad to have him here. If there was to be a fight, she could imagine no better partner to have at her back.

Swinging right into the alley, the pair quickly scanned the small alley for any place that they could use to hide from their pursuers. A small balcony obscured by hanging clothes caught Satsuki's eyes, and she pointed Uzu to it.

“Uzu, here. The balcony.” She said shortly, before taking a running start. She hopped one, two, three paces up the wall as if it were the ground itself, before latching onto the side of the balcony and hauling herself inside. Uzu followed suit, the two of them sitting close together, peering out through the hanging clothes.

It wasn't long before their pursuers entered the alley, looking around in confusion. One was a short, petite girl with a black beanie pulled low over her head, the other slightly taller and more muscular with what seemed to be normal black-blue scraggly hair. It wasn't until the taller of the two shook her hair out, revealing a bright red streak, that they realized who had been following them all day. Satsuki shook her head in amusement while Sanageyama simply sighed, head hanging.

“Shit! Do you think they were onto us?” they heard Ryuko say.

The other girl ripped her beanie off her head, revealing a set of long pink locks. Only when she had fixed her hat hair did she place the beanie softly back on her head, speaking in a nasally voice.

“Probably. Satsuki-chan is as sharp as they come-”

Satsuki couldn't help but smile.

“-and despite how *dumb* that northern Kanto monkey is I wouldn't put it past him either. We probably got sloppy and they hightailed it outta here. Damn...”

“Hey-” Sanageyama fumed, preparing to get up and retort when Satsuki placed both hands on his shoulders, pushing him back down. One hand then deftly moved to his chin, pulling him into a deep and passionate kiss that made his face heat up like a stove. They heard Ryuko and Nonon down below saying some more things, but they had quickly tuned out of their conversation. As they heard the couple below's footsteps slowly fade into the twilight, Satsuki and Uzu sat there in their random secluded balcony and kissed for what seemed like hours. What had started as simply Satsuki trying to stop Uzu from talking had turned into an outpouring of feeling that neither of them had realized was going to happen, but neither of them denied.

“Whoa, where did that come from?” Uzu said, face red as a turnip and bewildered.

Satsuki giggled, covering her mouth with her hand. “I'm sorry. I was just trying to shut you up. Don't act as if you didn't enjoy it, Uzu.” She said playfully.

Uzu smiled, returning her jest. “It was alright, I guess...” He said, smirking.

Satsuki cocked a thick eyebrow, pushing Uzu's shoulder lightly. “Oh? Just alright? Perhaps I'll just knock you out next time, it would certainly be easier.”

They both laughed for easily a half minute, more than they were used to doing by a large margin. When it was over, Satsuki stood, offering a hand to Uzu. “I know an expensive bar nearby that actually serves decent swill. Care to abuse some of the Kiryuin fortune?”

Uzu simply sneered, rising easily from his perch and preparing to exit the balcony the same way they had entered it.

“I wouldn't miss it for the world.”

The bar was as dark and smoky as Satsuki's gaze as they sat next to each other at a small corner booth. Solitary piano music reached them in spurts between the sound of hushed conversation and clinking glasses, and wisps of smoke rose slowly from the freshly doused cigarette in the ashtray on their table. At the beginning of the day Satsuki had donned a simple tight black sweater, over which she layered a puffy winter's vest, almost akin to something one would wear while skiing. She had then layered a navy blue pleated skirt over black tights and high boots to finish the look. As she sidled up next to Sanageyama in their booth with two new drinks, the vest lay unworn next to Uzu, along with the gray blazer he had stripped off himself as soon as they had entered the bar. He was now down to a white dress shirt, sleeves rolled up, matching gray slacks and snakeskin loafers.

Satsuki placed a simple whiskey on the rocks in a tumbler glass in front of him, sipping her own dry vodka martini before placing her elbow on the table, settling one cheek in her hand. She looked at him with an intriguing combination of amusement, stoicism and longing. Uzu took a sip from his glass, feeling the strong alcohol slide down his throat and burn. They had both had several drinks over the course of the few hours since they had entered the bar, and were both starting to feel the alcohol's effects.

After a while, Uzu realized he had been taking Satsuki in for longer than was appropriate. He admired the way her skin-tight sweater and tights hugged her toned body in all the right places, her normally hard-set features staring back at him in amusement. Fully realizing what he was doing, he quickly averted his gaze, hoping Satsuki hadn't noticed. He felt Satsuki's hand slowly turn his face to meet hers, and realized she was smirking.

“What's the matter, Uzu? You're staring at me as if you've never seen a real woman before.” She said mischievously.

Uzu's faced flushed. “I-I'm sorry, Satsuki. That was inappropriate of me, it won't happen again.”

“Please. I'm no prude, Sanageyama. I'd be lying if I said some part of me didn't enjoy it. It's somewhat pleasing to be admired for my beauty instead of my power, for once.” Satsuki said quietly, folding her hand over Sanageyama's.

“Well, you're quite beautiful, Satsuki.” Uzu said, smiling warmly.

Satsuki felt her heart swell in her chest like it never had before. She was used to being flattered and complimented for sure, but there was something so genuine and earnest about this comment that made her feel so much different. Like despite all the worries she had about her sister, friends and company, everything was going to be alright because the man she had feelings for thought she was beautiful.

“You're just flattering me...” She said breathily before their lips touched, Uzu's free hand landing on top of one of her legs. She placed one hand on top of his, the other moving up to cup his cheek.

Before long Satsuki had, in one fell swoop, placed Uzu's jacket in his lap, grabbed her vest and slapped a large sum of cash down on the table, moving to exit the booth. Tucking an errant strand of her bobbed haircut behind one ear, she gestured to Uzu and simply said “Come with me.”

Unable to argue or question anything, Uzu placed his hand in Satsuki's as they set off into the cool autumn night, enjoying the weather and the feeling of drunkenness that isolated them from its effects somewhat. Walking only a few short blocks in silence, Satsuki eventually lead them to the foot of a tall apartment building, waving a keycard at the reader to let them inside. Satsuki gestured for him to follow as she headed towards the elevator bank in the lobby, smirking ever so slightly and shimmying once again out of her puffy vest.

“What is this place?” Uzu asked wondrously as Satsuki hit the button marked “P”, situated at the very top of the tall bank of buttons.

“My apartment for long stays in the city, whenever I'm not at Kiryuin manor. I'm fairly sure only Nonon has seen it.” Satsuki winked, “I'm definitely sure you're the first gentleman I've brought home here.”

Uzu laughed heartily, facing Satsuki and placing his hands on her hips, squeezing. The alcohol had really begun to effect him on the walk over and it was boosting his confidence significantly. “Oh, is that what's happening?” He said suavely, leaning in for a kiss before he was interrupted by the *ding* of the elevator bell signaling that they had reached their destination.

It wasn't long before the large door of the penthouse sweet swung open, revealing, as the lights slowly came up, a lavishly modern apartment. The main foyer spread into a large, sunken living area with several amenities. The eyes were immediately drawn to the floor-to-ceiling windows that offered a 180 degree view of the Tokyo cityscape glittering around and below them. There was a long, fancy couch situated in front of the main bank of windows, and it was here that Satsuki draped her vest before slipping her boots off and making her way over to an inset in the far wall.

Sanageyama followed suit, removing his blazer and rolling up his sleeves once again before lowering himself onto the large couch, comfortably surveying the twinkling city below. He drummed his fingers absentmindedly on the back of the couch, stretching his legs before settling completely into his seat. After a while he noticed airy, ethereal jazz piano tinkling through the air around his head. Turning to see what the source of the music was, he noticed that Satsuki had dropped the needle on an actual record, spinning slowly on a turntable in the inset on the wall. The faded, warm sound of the music met his ears pleasingly, as did the sight of his date slinking over to him in equal measure.

Sanageyama moved to get up and meet Satsuki, but she had other ideas. Her cold blue eyes piercing his the entire time, she pressed the center of Uzu's chest to push him back down onto the couch, sinking down herself to straddle him. She smiled a devilishly dazzling smile, before raising her right hand and snapping, the lights responding to her command by diminishing completely. It was a clear, cool autumn night outside the windows, and as such the light of the full moon lit the entire apartment in a pale white-blue light.

They kissed, passionately and hungrily, before Uzu moved the ministrations of his mouth to Satsuki's slender neck, kissing and sucking at the pale, soft skin. Satsuki buried one hand in his thick green hair as she moved slowly upon his lap, feeling Uzu's excitement at the situation growing by the minute. Deciding to move things further along, Satsuki once again pushed Uzu back against the couch, reaching down to the hem of her sweater and lifting. The skintight black sweater traveled up over her head with ease, revealing her sizable breasts contained by a lace bra. Sanageyama tried to contain his amusement but Satsuki noticed easily.

“And what, may I ask, is so funny Uzu?” She said, half stern and half playful. Uzu's face flushed.

“Well, it's just...a lace bra? It doesn't suit you, Satsuki.” Uzu said carefully, still smirking.

To Uzu's surprise, Satsuki simply reached around behind her back to unclasp the bra. “Maybe I should take it off, then.” she said breathily, removing the bra in one fell swoop, her breasts now fully exposed.

Uzu's mouth hung open, his surprise only furthered when Satsuki took one of his hands and placed it on one of the soft, firm mounds, squeezing for effect. Unable to contain his lust any longer, Uzu returned to kissing Satsuki deeply and aggressively, running his hands over her taut body like an adventurer exploring a cave.

The moments following this were a blur for both of them. Their senses dulled and confidence increased by the alcohol they had consumed, it did not take much longer for several more articles of clothing to be removed from the both of them. Satsuki remembered at a certain point ending up on one end of the couch, one leg draped over the couch's arm, with a head of bushy green hair all that was visible buried in her nether regions. One of her hands was buried in his hair, and she was making sounds neither of them knew she was capable of making.

And then the roles were switched, Sanageyama sprawled in the middle of the couch, Satsuki on all fours beside him. To say it was surreal to see his former superior's head bobbing up and down in his lap wouldn't have even begun to describe the feelings he was having, but between that and the fact that Satsuki *clearly* knew what she was doing he resolved to simply enjoy this moment of pure bliss. He glanced downward at his lap once again, one hand situated in the small of Satsuki's back. Her piercing blue eyes stared back up at him as she worked, making it much harder not contain himself at the sights and sensations he was taking in all at once.

Then, as if by magic, a condom was introduced into the mix and Satsuki was straddling him again, his arms around her waist. She deftly moved herself up and down with the rhythm of a trained dancer, burying both hands in Sanageyama's hair as he desperately worked from her neck to her breasts and back with his mouth, Satsuki emitting more pleasured sounds as he

did so. Satsuki felt a sudden pang of guilt as a thought crossed her mind that this might be too much for their first date, but soon changed her mind when she factored in not only how long the two of them had known each other, but also how hard it was to feel guilty about this decision when such unabated pleasure was running through every inch of her body. She felt completely comfortable in her skin, something no man had been able to completely achieve with her.

The pale moonlight made Satsuki's already light white skin positively glow as she continued to move on Sanageyama, her shapely figure framed by the twinkling lights of the city below outside the large windows. The pace of their encounter seemed to be ramping up, Sanageyama feeling a stirring in his depths that was matched by the increased frequency of Satsuki's moans.

“Satsuki, I-” was all Uzu could manage, panting.

“Me too.” Satsuki returned between moans, biting her lower lip and staring into his eyes.

She increased her pace further, her eyes involuntarily closing as they both neared the edge. Their climaxes came together, as one series of several waves, Satsuki throwing her entire upper body backwards slightly, letting her mouth loll open and her hair drape backwards over her shoulders. Sanageyama's vision blurred and he felt as if he exploded from the inside out, contractions of pleasure washing their way through his entire body. After it was all over, the only sound left in the cavernous apartment was the sound of their panting breaths as they recovered.

The next thing either of them remembered was standing before the bank of windows some short time later, each clad in a simple robe, Satsuki sipping a cup of tea with Uzu's arm around her shoulders, content. It was warm and pleasant inside the apartment, but outside it had gotten colder, and snowflakes started to drift by the window, dancing on the wind like microscopic white butterflies.

Later, as they slipped into Satsuki's large, feather-soft bed and began the short journey into the land of sleep, both of them had the same thought, though they didn't know it:

“This is not the way I thought things would turn out. But I'm happier than I have been in a long time.”

Invitation

Chapter Notes

Sorry it's been so long everybody! Working on life and other fanfics keeps ya busy. Enjoy as always!

Ryuko awoke the next morning feeling unusually refreshed. She was alone on Nonon's couch, now wrapped in a small throw blanket and still in her winter clothes from the previous night. Briefly glancing at the view outside, Ryuko was pleasantly surprised to see that the light snowfall that had started the previous night had continued into the morning, the rooftops around them now powdered with a thin layer of uncharacteristic snow.

“Ohayou, baka.” came Nonon's welcome voice, directly over Ryuko's shoulder.

Turning to face her, Ryuko caught a split-second smirk from Nonon before she bent down and placed a friendly kiss on Ryuko's lips, pushing a steaming cup of coffee into her hands.

“It's just like you like it. Three sweeteners and plenty of milk...I'd be surprised if it even tasted like coffee at this point.” Nonon said sarcastically, sipping her own cup of pure black coffee.

“Wow, Nonon. This is kinda like, actually hospitable. What gives?” Ryuko asked incredulously.

Nonon took another sip from her own cup, smiling slightly and placing a small hand on Ryuko's shoulder and rubbing with her thumb.

“Well, when the person you have a huge crush on confesses their love for you it...makes you do crazy things.” Nonon lilted, looking away slightly sheepishly.

Ryuko's face split into a wide grin, happy that she was validated in her feelings. She turned around on the couch, balancing on her knees and craning her neck forwards to place an earnest, long kiss on Nonon's lips. The taste of each others' coffee mingling in their mouths made the experience only that much more sweet. They broke away from each other, meeting eyes and smiling genuinely.

“C'mon, *babe*. Let's make breakfast.” Nonon said with another smirk, leaving a look of surprise on Ryuko's face as she sauntered away into the kitchen.

“B-Babe?! You're calling me babe now?! I don't know if I'm comfortable with this level of familiarity, princess!” Ryuko called out jovially, scrambling after Nonon. Her stomach rumbled, and the idea of breakfast was all the more appealing when paired with the idea of making it with Nonon.

About an hour later, Ryuko was setting some cups and plates out on Nonon's small dining table when a sharp, short rap came at the apartment door.

“Can you get that? I'm finishing the eggs.” Nonon hollered from the kitchen.

Setting the last plate down, Ryuko ran a hand absentmindedly through her hair as she approached the door, unlatching the lock and swinging it open mid-yawn.

“Listen, if you're gonna try to sell us on some religion you can just-” Ryuko froze when she opened her eyes and they were met by a pair of cobalt-blue ones all too similar to her own.

“S-Satsuki?! What the-I-I mean hey, nee-san! Um...what are you doing here?” Ryuko stammered nervously.

Satsuki was bundled up in her finest winter clothes, a long navy blue wool peacoat over a black skirt and black leggings with high boots. Her ensemble was wrapped up with a maroon

scarf, which she had untied coming in out of the cold and let drape around her shoulders. She held a box in her gloved hands that had markings from a local bakery, and was smiling ever so slightly like she was wont to do around Ryuko. Ever-poised, ever-dignified.

“Hello, imouto. May I come in?” Satsuki said shortly, her husky voice laced with a very subtle hint of joviality.

“O-Oh yeah, sure! Come in, come in.” Ryuko said quickly, pulling Satsuki into the cozy apartment and closing the door behind her. “Nonon! Satsuki's here!” Ryuko yelled nervously towards the kitchen.

The two sisters could hear a small “Eep!” emanate from the kitchen as Ryuko's yell reached her, and they both snorted in amusement.

“I hope I'm not interrupting anything. I brought pastries from the bakery near my apartment.” Satsuki said apologetically as she slipped her scarf, coat, shoes and gloves off delicately, Ryuko taking the box from her as she did so.

“We were just making some breakfast, you wanna join us? With the pastries we have more than enough food for three.” Ryuko said, Satsuki nodding in agreement thankfully. The two walked nearer to the kitchen, Nonon appearing in her cooking apron looking unprepared and nervous.

“S-Satsuki-chan, hi! What an, um, unexpected surprise!” Nonon stammered nervously, carrying the last of their breakfast as she went to set it upon the table. Ryuko followed and placed the pastries on the table, completing the setting.

“It's good to see you, Nonon. Thank you for the generosity.” Satsuki said gratefully, before bending downwards slightly and placing an uncharacteristically affectionate kiss on Nonon's cheek and smiling her small, demure smile, hands clasped behind her back. Nonon's face flushed immediately.

“I-I'll uh...be right back!” Nonon squeaked before rushing back into the kitchen, unseen once again. Ryuko snorted and shook her head in amusement.

“Jeez, nee-san. You trying to steal my girlfriend or something?” slipped out of Ryuko's mouth before she could control her urge to shit-talk, immediately realizing the folly of talking about Satsuki's best friend in such a way. But to Satsuki's credit, she simply sneered and shook her head. Satsuki sat down at the table, and Ryuko moved to join her as Nonon returned from the kitchen having gathered herself, as well as more coffee and tea for Satsuki.

“Nothing so simple as stealing your girlfriend brings me here today, I'm afraid.” Satsuki said as she sipped her tea graciously. Nodding at Nonon, Satsuki continued tossing complements. “Your tea is delicious as always, Nonon.” she said as Nonon smiled widely.

“No, I'm afraid what I came here for today is a much needed discussion. A discussion on what you two saw yesterday.” Satsuki said, taking another sip as if she didn't drop a massive bomb on the other two girls at the table.

Nonon looked as if she was moments away from fainting, and Ryuko spit her mouthful of coffee out onto the table before apologizing profusely and attempting horribly to clean it up with the sleeve of her jacket. After the chaos subsided, Ryuko was the first with the courage to speak again.

“So uh, what exactly *did* we see yesterday?” She asked warily, before Nonon burst into the conversation loudly and unexpectedly.

“Satsuki-chan, I am SO SORRY I had no idea you would find out, and we were just curious, and we never should have done it and-” Satsuki held up and hand to silence the both of them, smiling sadly.

“Please. It is my fault. I should have had the confidence and wherewithal to tell you two in the first place. My sister and my best friend should have been the first to know, and I am truly, truly sorry that I pushed you into the situation we found ourselves in yesterday.” Satsuki finished her cup of tea, the room dead silent other than the clinking of cup on saucer as she placed both back down on the table in front of her. She continued, meeting both of their eyes one at a time as she spoke.

“The truth is, Sanageyama and I are...involved. Dating. Boyfriend and girlfriend, whatever one would like to call it. The reason we decided to keep the whole affair somewhat under wraps is...well, we didn't think many people would take it well.” Satsuki said softly, folding her hands in her lap, her gaze straying elsewhere. The room remained very quiet for what seemed like a long time, Nonon and Ryuko meeting eyes and exchanging silent looks. There was no doubt about it: they both felt horrible about the entire situation.

Nonon saw flames erupt in Ryuko's eyes, and her heart skipped a beat when her messy-haired, not-quite-human girlfriend slammed her fist down into the table, making Satsuki and Nonon jump and glasses rattle noisily.

“Listen, Satsuki.” Ryuko said in a determined voice. “I'm your sister, and Nonon's your best friend. We might have had our rough patches back at the academy, but we love each other to pieces, Satsuki. That's about as improbable as it gets. So if you have feelings for Sanageyama, then it's not our or anyone else's place to judge you for that. We're not gonna be upset no matter who you wanna date, cause it's *your* life! And shit, there are a lot of worse dudes you could be dating than Sanageyama, nee-san.” Ryuko finished her rant, sinking back into her chair and meeting Satsuki's eyes confidently.

“Heh. What she said.” Nonon stated, crossing her arms. “He may be a Northern Kanto Monkey, but he's *your* Northern Kanto Monkey. I don't have a problem with it if it's what you want, and if it makes you happy, Satsuki-chan. It *does* make you happy, right?”

“Yes. More than I have been in my entire life.” Satsuki said quietly, glancing at the both of them again.

Ryuko met Nonon's eyes, and they smiled warmly at each other. Ryuko took Nonon's hand in hers, squeezing it gently as she looked back to her sister.

“That's all that matters to us, nee-san. We're glad you're happy.” Ryuko said softly, smiling widely.

Sastuki returned their smiles appreciatively. “This is a big relief to me, Ryuko. Nonon. Thank you, I'm glad. For the first time since I can remember, I am really, truly happy.”

The rest of the breakfast went swimmingly, the three girls smiling, laughing and joking as they ate the feast laid out before them. It was as enjoyable and positive outcome given the events of the past few weeks, and the difficulties first associated with these new relationship developments had come and now gone, making everyone's life easier.

The snow continued to fall as Satsuki finally got up from the table as Nonon and Ryuko were clearing it, preparing to leave.

“I probably should go and see if the snow has completely trapped Uzu inside the apartment. Thank you for breakfast Nonon, Ryuko. It was delicious.” Satsuki said, smiling warmly and beginning to bundle up once again.

“Of course, Satsuki-chan. We should do this more often, in fact. Though next time invite the monkey, he's more than welcome as long as he doesn't track mud in here.” Nonon said, Ryuko snorting and elbowing her playfully in the ribs. They held each others' hands affectionately as they walked Satsuki to the door, the smiles on all of their faces impossible to get rid of.

“There's one more thing I'd like to ask, or rather propose, before I go.” Satsuki stated mysteriously, turning to face the two other girls.

“In a few months I will be traveling to New York City in the United States on business for several weeks, in my capacity as REVOCs CEO. I have extended invitations to the rest of our usual group to join us, all expenses paid. I wanted to ask you two in person before finalizing everything. Will you join me?” Satsuki asked earnestly, clearly a lot riding on their answer.

Nonon and Ryuko looked at each other for a split second, before unanimously hurling themselves around Satsuki in a desperate bear hug.

“Yes, of course! Thank you so much, Satsuki-chan!” Nonon squeaked, beside herself.

“You fuckin' kidding me? Ha! I've always wanted to see the Empire State Building!” Ryuko hollered, bouncing up and down excitedly.

Satsuki smiled, holding them both at arms length and looking into their eyes.

“I'm so very glad. It shall certainly be memorable, I shall begin making the arrangements.” Satsuki turned to leave, patting them both on the shoulder before doing so.

“I'm so happy for the both of you. You seem very happy together.” Satsuki said with one last smile, before exchanging goodbyes and exiting into the hall, the apartment door closing behind her. It wasn't long after it closed that Nonon and Ryuko's lips met, both trying to hold back smiles and failing.

Altercation

“So, where you gonna take your new girlfriend on your first date?” Ryuko asked mischievously, skipping ahead of Nonon and smiling wide.

“You are such an asshole, you know that? She was *not* hitting on me!” Nonon returned through clenched teeth, fists clenched by her sides.

Ryuko was referring to the pretty clerk at the trendy record shop they had just left in the west village, who had complimented Nonon on her hair color. Nonon had responded in perfect English of course, Ryuko comprehending only about every third word and choosing to supplement her lack of understand with her own narrative. She knew the girl wasn't hitting on Nonon, but she couldn't help taking the opportunity to use her misunderstanding to her advantage.

Sensing her joke had overstayed its welcome, Ryuko turned and moved back to Nonon, facing her and stopping her in her tracks with a passionate kiss. Their gloved fingers intertwined as Ryuko moved a hand to cup the side of her girlfriend's face, smiling slightly against her lips. As they broke away, their exhaled breath was plain to see in the biting winter's air.

They had all arrived in New York last night, enjoying the prodigious accommodations that only someone of Satsuki's wealth and influence could provide: the entire top floor of an expensive and fashionable building situated on the western side of central park, with stunning views of midtown and the park itself. They had soon resolved to split up for their first full day in the city, and now that Nonon and Ryuko had had their fix of the west village, they were on to take in a view of the Statue of Liberty from Battery Park. Hand in hand, they meandered down Wall street towards the southern tip of Manhattan, trapped in the shadow of the massive ziggurat that was One World Trade Center.

“You know, Honnouji Academy was kind of crazy, but this place takes it to a completely different level...” Ryuko marveled as she stared upwards at the myriad of towering structures around them, Nonon choosing to focus on steering her idiot of a girlfriend away from running into passerby as she gawked.

Soon they were at battery park, Nonon having bought them lunch from one of the many street vendors present around the park itself. Ryuko looked at the unfamiliar food suspiciously, wary of its contents.

“What the hell is this exactly?” Ryuko questioned.

“I don't really know...the sign said 'halal', but I have no clue what that means. He said it was good so I bought it, what more do you want, baka?” Nonon said with a sigh, biting tentatively into her food.

Ryuko did the same and found it pleasant enough. Certainly not as pleasing as Japanese street food, but a new and exciting change of pace nonetheless. They finished their lunch in a snap and stood near the railing, watching the myriad of boats traveling up and down the Hudson, the Statue of Liberty keeping her eternal vigilance off in the distance. The weather was clear and crisp, and a fresh snowfall was on the ground, giving everything a significantly dream-like quality. Nonon buried her face in Ryuko's jacketed shoulder, Ryuko wrapping her arm around the petite girl's waist and smiling.

“This is so goddamn romantic I could puke.” Ryuko said with a snort, kissing Nonon on the top of the head through her signature black beanie.

“I know, right?” Nonon mumbled into her shoulder with a slight nod of agreement.

They were hopelessly lost, and it was starting to get dark. One would think that in a city built around the grid system it would be easy to get around, but somehow Ryuko had managed to get them lost on their way out to Flushing Meadows park in Queens. They were now wandering aimlessly down a series of desolate, empty streets in an industrial sector of Queens, a light snowfall drifting down from the now gray sky. They had also found themselves in the only cell phone deadzone in the entire city, it seemed.

Nonon sighed once again as she looked down at her smartphone, trying to get some sort of internet or GPS reception, to no avail.

“This is hopeless, transfer. Where the hell are we, even? There's nothing but run-down buildings and abandoned storefronts.” Nonon muttered.

“I know, I know, we're lost. Really lost. I have no idea how we *got* this lost, actually. We probably shouldn't have gotten off at that stop...” Ryuko trailed off, spying a group of burly men striding towards them purposefully through the snowfall. Nonon tightened her grip on Ryuko's hand, wary.

“You ladies lost? You don't look like yer from around here.” one of the men said, poison dripping plainly in his voice. Nonon's eyes narrowed, but with her limited understanding of the English language the emotion was lost on Ryuko.

“Yes, lost! Help?” Ryuko stammered in broken English, the men chuckling to themselves at her wording.

“Oh yeah, we'll help ya get to where ya need to go alright. Follow us!” The large man beckoned, Ryuko smiling down at Nonon, unaware of her discomfort or of the clear trap. Ryuko pulled Nonon along behind the group of men eagerly, despite Nonon's warnings.

“Wait, Ryuko, they aren't-”

“Ah, calm down babe. They said they're gonna help us, let's go!”

“You idiot, how can you be-”

Nonon was cut off when she ran headlong into Ryuko, who had stopped dead in her tracks at the mouth of an alley. Four men stood inside the alley, the three that had led them there blocking their exit. Ryuko's eyes narrowed, finally beginning to understand the trap as the men all cracked their knuckles, some producing crude weapons like chains or switchblades. Ryuko looked down at Nonon, understanding painted clearly on her face.

“They aren't gonna help us, are they?” Ryuko asked her in Japanese, letting go of Nonon's hand and clenching her fists in rage.

“No. We're going to have to do some work to get out of this one, you dolt.” Nonon responded, maneuvering so that her and Ryuko were standing back to back between the two groups of men.

“Lucky for you, this kinda work's my specialty.” Ryuko said with a sneer, turning her attention to the four men within the alleyway that she was now facing down.

“Hey!” she yelled, calling up all the mastery of English she could muster.

“Big mistake.” Ryuko jeered, before launching herself at lightning speed at the four men with a scream.

Spinning under the first man's punch, Ryuko folded into a crouch for a split second, exploding upwards with a devastating uppercut that knocked the first man out cleanly with one hit. Her second target was wielding a switchblade, but before he could make use of it Ryuko had called upon her life fiber-enhanced strength, throwing the falling form of the first man into the others, knocking two over and making the other stumble and drop his knife.

Launching a strike to the stomach, Ryuko brought an elbow down into the second man's face as he doubled over in surprise, effectively eliminating him. She stretched her arms above her head in a stretch, a mock-yawn escaping her lips as the other two got back to their feet, spitting mad.

“You bitch!” one screamed as her came at her.

Sweeping her leg down low, Ryuko knocked his legs out from under him, striking his face with a jab as he fell, breaking his nose as he yelped in pain. The final man came from behind her, Ryuko choosing to kick her other powerful leg backwards and upwards into his groin, regaining her stance and delivering a final roundhouse kick to the face that would leave the thug seeing stars for weeks.

Ryuko watched in awe as her girlfriend gracefully danced her way around her remaining two attackers at the end of the alley, one already laying face down on the asphalt. Nonon let a devastating punch come extremely close to her jovial face, spinning away and under at the last second and letting it connect with the face of the other attacker trying to sneak up behind her. One man went down permanently, the other yelped in pain as Nonon slid silently between his legs, popping up behind him and grabbing his head between her arms over one shoulder. With all her weight, she carried the man's head all the way into the ground, knocking him cold and ending their fight in all of about a minute.

It was completely dark now and snow was beginning to fall regularly, but that didn't stop the two girls from wordlessly meeting eyes as they made their way back to each other in the alley, pink and grey-blue pupils piercing into one another through the night. It wasn't much longer before Ryuko had slammed Nonon against the wall of the alley, kissing her hungrily and feeling under her coat to run her palms against her soft skin.

“Oh my god...that was...so...hot...” Nonon said between sharp breaths as Ryuko sucked at and bit the skin of her neck, hungry for more.

“The way you dropped those dudes...sometimes I forget how good at fighting you are.” Ryuko whispered breathily into Nonon's ear as she returned the favor, running her tongue and teeth against Ryuko's neck as Ryuko caressed the soft skin of Nonon's hips with her hands.

“I'll show you again sometime.” Nonon said seductively in Ryuko's ear, nipping at an earlobe and making Ryuko yelp before burying a small hand in the back of Ryuko's messy mane and demanding more mouth-to-mouth.

Minutes passed, the two girls completely ignoring the world surrounding them, until a small vibration in Nonon's coat pocket brought them out of their reverie. Nonon spied a look at her phone, Ryuko looking on with curiosity.

“Hm, looks like I have reception again. Satsuki-chan wants us to meet back at the penthouse for dinner and a 'small celebration', as she puts it.” Nonon said, looking slightly disappointed that they couldn't continue but glad that they finally had a method of finding their way out of this mess.

“Alright, but we're continuing this later.” Ryuko said as Nonon pulled her by the hand out of the alley and back towards the nearest subway stop, staring at her phone.

“Duh.” Nonon said with a slight smirk and a squeeze of Ryuko's hand.

Renewal

Chapter Notes

> I know it's a bit early for New Years, but I'm going to be out of the country for a week and wanted to update this before I leave. Thanks for sticking with it, everyone!

It was New Years' Eve in New York City, and festivities had already begun at Satsuki's midtown penthouse. Champagne bottles popped and festive music wafted through the air as the entire Honnouji Academy gang celebrated another year gone past.

“Soroi, please. You're more than welcome to retire to your own quarters. It's been a long day and I'm sure you'd like some peace and quiet.” Satsuki said over the noise of the party. Soroi smiled and prepared another bottle of seemingly endless champagne, looking out across the assembled guests: Ryuko and Nonon, Mako and Gamagoori, Iori and Inumuta, and Sanageyama. He spoke so that everyone in the expansive living room overlooking the city could hear.

“I'd much rather remain here, in the company of all of you.” He said kindly, eliciting an assortment of proclamations and shouts from the party, all of love. Mako squealed and hugged him tightly, giggling profusely. Soroi froze for a split-second before smiling once again, placing his hand gently on Mako's back.

“Soroi-san, you're the beeeeeeeest!!” She squeaked.

“Thank you, ojou-sama.” He returned, eyes feeling a bit more moist than usual.

Ryuko and Nonon watched the whole affair fondly from their perch on a couch in the corner near one of the windows, holding hands with Nonon's pink-haired head laying on Ryuko's shoulder. Ryuko traced circles absentmindedly on Nonon's hand with her thumb.

Looking over at Satsuki, Ryuko noticed Sanageyama slip away from his conversation to wrap a hand lovingly around Satsuki's waist, smiling brightly. They shared a small peck before Sanageyama exited the room in the direction of the bathroom, down a long hallway.

“I'll be right back.” Ryuko said as she rose from her seat next to Nonon, stalking across the room and into the secluded hallway after Sanageyama.

When he exited the bathroom, Sanageyama was met by Ryuko, leaning against the wall not far from the door with her arms folded, a frown on her face. She was fixing him with a look he had seen many times before, though it was never welcome. It was the look she used when she was about to fight.

“M-Matoi! Uh, what's up?” He asked nervously, his ever-alert eyes looking for any existing exit.

“Listen, Uzu.” Ryuko said, scowling and stalking nearer to him slowly. Reaching him, she pulled his face down by the collar of his shirt and frowned even deeper, Sanageyama shaking at the fire burning in her eyes.

“I'm fine with you dating Satsuki. I really am. But I swear-” Ryuko began, wrenching Sanageyama's collar further into her hands and slamming him against the wall nearest them.

“-if you *fuck* with Satsuki or break her heart, I will *end* you. You got it, monkey? You don't need your Shingantsu to see that I ain't playin'.” Ryuko finished, practically growling her words through clenched teeth. Sanageyama put his hands up before him, palms outward, in a gesture of placation and smiled nervously.

“Y-You got it, Matoi. Not that you ever had anything to worry about...I know better than to cross Satsuki-sama or her sister.” Sanageyama stammered, slumping backwards against the wall as Ryuko released him, folding her arms across her chest once again. She smiled fiercely, her job as the protective younger sister fulfilled.

“Let's get back in there, people are gonna think something weird's goin' on.” Ryuko said, jerking her thumb over her shoulder before leaving for the large living room again.

As the two returned, Soroi approached them with a smile and offered them fresh flutes of champagne. Nonon had left the couch and joined Satsuki in friendly conversation, Satsuki smiling as she saw Ryuko and Sanageyama approaching. Nonon placed her hands on her hips, furrowing her brows and frowning.

“The hell are you two doing dicking around back there? Something I need to worry about?” Nonon said, looking both of them over with suspicion.

“Easy, Jakuzure. Nothing serious.” Sanageyama placated, repeating hands-up the gesture he made earlier.

“Just some friendly conversation.” Ryuko said, wrapping an arm around Nonon's waist and squeezing. Nonon huffed before giving in, standing on her tiptoes to place a soft kiss against Ryuko's cheek. Ryuko blushed slightly.

“You two really are the perfect fit. I would have never guessed the first time you two crossed swords that this would've happened.” Satsuki said, a small smile gracing her sharp features.

“Ah man, what a time that was...” Ryuko said, relinquishing her grip on Nonon before standing on the nearest chair, one foot propped on the arm.

“It's missing the sounds of your SCREAMS, transfer student!” Ryuko screeched, the other party guests looking over and chuckling at the impression.

“Hey, you asshole!” Nonon screamed, ripping Ryuko down from the chair by one leg. They wrestled for a bit before Ryuko stood and started mock-conducting, running away giggling as Nonon chased her angrily.

Satsuki and Sanageyama both chuckled to themselves, Satsuki wrapping both arms around his waist and squeezing, looking up into his bright face.

“Everything alright between you and Ryuko?” Satsuki asked inquisitively, cocking an eyebrow.

“Yeah, it's fine. Your sister is...terrifying, at times.” Sanageyama said, smiling back down at her after shivering slightly. They both shared a hearty chuckle, watching the festivities going on around them fondly.

“Come, let's help Soroi with the food.” Satsuki said, pulling Sanageyama with her towards the kitchen.

It was just minutes until midnight, and soon fireworks would soar into the air all across New York, celebrating yet another year gone past and a new year effectively rung in. Ryuko and Nonon had made up from their mock-fight, and were standing silently in their own secluded area of the living room, staring out across the expansive skyline of the city towards the Empire State Building, hand in hand. The rest of the party was reaching its climax in terms of raucousness, but for some reason both of them were in a particularly romantic and contemplative mood, and so they chose to remain alone with each other in case anything uncharacteristically poignant were to be said.

“Ryuko.” Nonon said quietly, squeezing Ryuko's hand. It took a second for Ryuko to tear her gray eyes away from the city lights below, meeting Nonon's pink irises and smiling.

“Hmm?” She said, resisting the urge to kiss her girlfriend for the *n*th time that evening, taking in the immensely serious look Nonon had on her face.

“Ryuko, I...well, I don't really know how to say this so I'm just going to lay it out there. Come next spring, I'm moving to Kobe for University. I won't ask you to come with me-”

“Can I?” Ryuko asked plainly, catching Nonon off-guard.

“W-What?” Nonon asked, her lack of words utterly apparent.

“Can I come with you to Kobe?” Ryuko asked, her expression unchanging and unflinching. Nonon was floored. She had considered the possibility that Ryuko would want to come, but not a reaction this immediate.

“Don't you want to stay in Tokyo with your sister and all your friends...?” Nonon asked, trailing off.

“Look. I love my sister and Mako and everyone, but-” Ryuko began, looking away and blushing.

“-but I love you, okay? I can find a school down there or a job or whatever, as long as it keeps me close to *you*. Being a member of the Kiryuin family shouldn't make that *too* difficult.” Ryuko said with a smirk, taking Nonon's face in her hands.

“I just have to look for a place to live...” Ryuko said, placing a finger to her chin and looking away thoughtfully. Nonon smiled, using her own hand to turn Ryuko's face back to face her own.

“Baka. You can just live with me.” Nonon said, standing once again to her full height to allow her lips to reach Ryuko's.

“I wasn't gonna ask-”

“Ten!”

Ryuko was cut off by the beginning of the countdown from the rest of the party.

“Nine!”

Ryuko and Nonon smiled, craning their necks to look over the rest of the party guests, drunk and revelling in full force.

“Eight!”

They looked back at each other, Ryuko taking each of Nonon's hands in her's.

“Seven!”

“We're gonna kiss, right?” Ryuko asked earnestly.

“Six!”

“Duh!” Nonon returned sarcastically.

“Five!”

Nonon's eyes shimmered in the light of the city.

“Four!”

Ryuko's heart beat faster within her chest.

“Three!”

They could both hear the soft thump of the fireworks around them already.

“Two!”

They began to lean in, their lungs completely devoid of breath.

“One!”

Ryuko cupped a hand into the small of Nonon's back, Nonon placing a slender arm around Ryuko's neck.

“Happy New Year!”

All noise ceased, Ryuko and Nonon's lips brushing against one another with a tenderness and romance that neither of them had felt in their entire lives up until this point. Ryuko's heart nearly exploded, and Nonon's face burned. Nonon's grip around Ryuko's neck tightened, Ryuko nearly pulling Nonon off her feet with the force of their embrace. It would be so easy to get lost in this sort of thing, but as Ryuko pulled away from Nonon and stared into her smiling face, she decided against it.

Ryuko became lost in Nonon's eyes instead.

FINAL

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Ten Years Later.

Their small home sat in a quiet neighborhood perched in the hills above Kobe, and as Ryuko pulled into the small driveway, she downshifted making the Ferrari's engine rumble and whine just like it did on the first day she drove it. Ryuko remarked upon just how long it had been since that first fateful day driving from Tokyo with Satsuki, exiting the vintage sedan and standing back, marveling at the condition of the vehicle. She had put a lot of miles and even more memories into it, but it was as if nothing had changed. It was a fond link to the past.

However, so much had indeed changed.

Shortly after returning from the trip to New York, Nonon and Ryuko had moved to Kobe, attending the prestigious Kobe University. Nonon had pursued music composition and performance, excelling at almost every turn. Ryuko always looked forward to the moments where she would lead the campus orchestra in grand performances, looking on from the font row with stars in her eyes.

Ryuko had decided to follow in her father's footsteps, majoring in fashion design and embarking on a new fling of creativity. Despite her lack of natural academic prowess, Ryuko excelled at both the design and construction of new garments, her teachers and classmates alike praising her shockingly unique yet extremely simplistic style. Unsurprisingly, she was known for favoring red and black in all her works.

After graduating, Nonon worked her way up the Kobe classical music ladder to her current position as music director and conductor of the Kobe Philharmonic Orchestra, the youngest woman ever to do so in the organization's history. Ryuko had struggled with what to do with her life until she was approached by an unlikely client: Satsuki. Her sister informed her that REVOCs would be planning to open a flagship boutique in Kobe for ultra-rare and sought after new designs, and Satsuki wanted Ryuko to be the head designer for the lines sold there (and only there).

Ryuko had of course agreed, continuing to make a name for herself in Japan and on the world stage as a highly sought-after designer for unique and simple new looks, placing the Kobe boutique as an international destination for shoppers and industry bigwigs alike.

Mako and Gamagoori had married almost immediately, Gamagoori insisting on the order that marriage brought to a relationship while Mako was positively enthralled with the idea of being a glamorous bride. Ryuko had carried Mako's long train behind her as she walked down the aisle looking positively radiant, a small incident occurring when Gamagoori burst in to loud fits of sobbing at the sight of his bride-to-be. Mako's father had joined in soon after, refusing to give his daughter over to him as he “changed his mind” and tried to steal Mako away before being subdued by his wife. Ryuko also found it hard to choke back uncharacteristic tears of her own as she watched how much her best friend had grown since the day they first met.

Satsuki and Sanageyama had a small, private wedding in the gardens of Kiryuin Manor not long ago. It was attended by a small amount of friends and family, and was every bit as subdued and filled with class as one might expect from two such dignified and poised figures. As the two kissed to seal their union forever, Ryuko and Nonon had met eyes across the altar, smiling at one another and mouthing *I love you* . Later, Soroi had served tea to everyone present just like he had done so many times before, tears visible in his eyes as he handed ornate cups to the new bride and groom. Satsuki had, for the first time in her life, hugged him at that moment and he broke down, crying fat tears of joy at how his little iron ojou-sama had grown into such a powerful and beautiful woman.

Ryuko stretched her arms above her head, yawning as she paced across the soft front lawn to the house's small porch. Her and Nonon had purchased it together almost exactly a year ago, the view while sitting on the front lawn during a lazy summer's day too much for them to resist.

“Tadaima!” Ryuko hollered as she swung the screen door closed behind her, the sweet scent of cooked rice and leeks swimming into her nostrils.

“Okaeri!” Nonon called back to her from the kitchen as Ryuko approached. Ryuko was surprised as she entered their small, fragrant kitchen that Nonon's long hair was once again pink, nowadays having let it slip occasionally back into its natural blonde color. She was wearing a floral print apron, stirring a large amount of steaming rice in a bowl on top of the stove with a cooking paddle.

She was 29 now, Ryuko 28.

“Your hair!” Ryuko exclaimed, crossing the small distance between them and running her fingers through Nonon's long pink locks. She then kissed Nonon on the top of the head, smelling the fragrant scent of the dye still present in her hair. Nonon smirked up at her as she stirred.

“Yeah, my hair. It's gotta be perfect for this weekend, dummy.” Nonon responded, pinching Ryuko's cheek affectionately before standing on her tiptoes and kissing her properly.

“Speaking of which, what time do they get in tonight?” Ryuko asked, pushing back the sleeve of her jacket and glancing at her watch.

“Should be any minute now. Everyone else is getting in tomorrow.” Nonon said absentmindedly, continuing to focus on stirring and seasoning the rice to perfection.

“Mm.” Ryuko continued, kissing Nonon once again on the top of the head before leaving the kitchen to retrieve something from their bedroom. On the way she passed their shared office and work space, littered with half-finished fashion ideas and numerous musical instruments. Ryuko couldn't count how many hours they had spent in this room together, Ryuko furiously sketching and sewing while Nonon serenaded her.

When she was rummaging through the closet, Ryuko barely heard a sharp rap at the entrance to their home, followed by a high-pitched squeal that could deafen anyone. Ryuko's head shot up, hitting the wall in front of her and eliciting a yelp of pain. Rubbing the knot now forming on the top of her head, she returned to the entrance to the small house to see what the fuss was about.

Two very recognizable figures stood in the doorway, hand in hand.

Nonon squealed once more, throwing her arms around Satsuki's neck in a powerful hug and nearly tackling her. Next was Sanageyama, who also received a hug, albeit slightly less

enthusiastic and coupled with a stoic “Hey, monkey.” Sanageyama simply blushed, still unused to signs of affection from Nonon even after all these years.

“Good to see you, Nonon. Where's Ryu-” Satsuki began, before catching sight of Ryuko returning from the bedroom. Ryuko smiled wide, her eyes twinkling at the sight of the both of them. Ryuko approached, giving Sanageyama a firm handshake and a punch in the arm before wrapping her arms tightly around her older sister's waist and squeezing, tucking her head under Satsuki's chin.

“Hey, nee-san.” Ryuko sighed, comforted as always by her sister's presence.

“Good to see you, imouto.” Satsuki returned, joining with Ryuko in smiling brightly.

Nonon ushered them all into the kitchen immediately, the meal she had been preparing now laid out on their small dining table. Rice was washed down plentifully with warm sake, and countless stories were told about the time that had passed since they had last all seen each other until Sanageyama broached the inevitable subject that was hanging over all their heads.

“So, Ryuko, Nonon...are you ready for your big day this weekend?” He said, Ryuko and Nonon sharing a brief look before they responded.

“All the particulars have been sorted, we just have to welcome everyone and do the deed itself.” Nonon said plainly.

“So what do we call you? Mrs. Matoi?” Sanageyama jibed, Nonon turning red in the face and inhaling sharply before Ryuko clamped her fiancee's hand with her own.

“We're not changing our names, Uzu. It's gonna be a lot less traditional than most weddings.” Ryuko interjected, breaking the tension that was always present between pink and green hair sitting at the table before her.

“I'm sure it will be marvelous, you two. I'm so happy for you, as always.” Satsuki said lovingly.

“Heh, maybe not as happy as Mako, I think. We're gonna have to have someone on duty to catch her when she faints.” Ryuko laughed.

“Don't worry, I'm sure the toad will be there to back her up as always. We just have to make sure that *he* doesn't faint before her.” Nonon said, eliciting laughter from the entire table.

They continued like this for hours, drinking more sake and eating the sweet cakes Nonon made for dessert while reminiscing and catching each other up. It all seemed so trivial, so light compared to what was to come.

After all, in a few days, Ryuko and Nonon would be married.

Ryuko paced nervously back and forth in front of the tent, the sea breeze forcing her to constantly perfect the hair that she had managed to wrangle into somewhat of a clean style for the first time in recent memory. She checked her watch for the fiftieth time this minute, her heart racing with nerves.

“Hey, how much longer are you gonna keep her in there for?” Ryuko called into the tent anxiously.

“Not much longer now, Ryuko.” Came Satsuki's calm, measured voice from the inside.

“We're doin' our best, Ryuko-chan!” Mako called.

“Keep yer pants on, transfer.” Ryuko heard Nonon say, instantly calming her nerves a bit. Turning around and placing her hands on her hips, Ryuko flashed a wide smile and snorted in

amusement. Even ten years later Nonon's nickname for Ryuko still made her swoon.

Ryuko looked over the venue for their wedding, a perfectly picturesque location for the occasion. Kenritsu Maiko park was a small seaside park in Kobe, nestled against the waters of Osaka bay and in the shadow of the immense Akashi-Kaikyo bridge. Off in the distance their guests waited in patient rows, seated in folding chairs set up before a raised platform set against the railing. A calm sea wind blew in over them from the still waters of the bay, easing Ryuko's nerves even more.

“Alright, don't faint!” Ryuko heard Mako say from behind her, and as her and Satsuki lifted the flaps of the tent in order to let Nonon out, Ryuko had to admit she felt light-headed for a second.

Nonon's bright pink hair was done up into an extraordinarily intricate bun, weaved together with painstaking precision. The sides of her hair framed her perfectly radiant face, looking up into Ryuko's with a measure of awe equal to both of them. This was the first time they had seen each other like this.

Nonon's dress was unconventional, a tight white lace top that flared out into a loose and flowing bottom that ended just before her knees, white stockings covering her legs that ran down into white heels. The dress was short sleeved, allowing Nonon's brilliantly soft and radiant skin to shine in the bright sun. In her hands she clutched a beautiful white bouquet, simple and small, just like her. The wind gusted and Ryuko smiled as she caught a view of Nonon's garters at the top of her stockings. She looked beautiful.

Ryuko had completely outdone herself as well, looking altogether pretty and disarming in a way that only she could. Her usually messy hair had been straightened and tamed, parted in the middle and framing her face perfectly. Her life fiber strands swished to the side in perfect unison, styled sideways as they always had been in prominence away from the rest of her hair. She wore a black blazer, a tight white dress shirt underneath. The collar was tied with a loose red bow almost identical to the uniform she wore when Nonon had seen her first, making her heart flutter with the memories of those fast times. Further she wore a black pleated skirt that ended midway down her thighs, black leggings covering her muscular legs. Bright red flats decorated her feet, allowing their difference in height to be nullified by Nonon's heels.

They looked into each other's eyes, now on the same level, and beamed at each other. Ryuko held out an arm for Nonon to take, both of them facing the assembled guests and taking a deep breath. Satsuki did the same for Mako, the two of their best friends assembling themselves in front of the brides-to-be to lead them to the front of the assembly.

As they walked slowly, a hush went over the crowd as they witnessed the two soon to be newlyweds approach. Gamagoori's large frame heaved in the back row, trying to stifle his sobs as Sanageyama consoled him jovially. Mako looked back at them and rolled her eyes, snorting.

“He always cries at weddings.” She whispered back at Nonon and Ryuko as they snickered.

Ryuko met the gaze of the Mankanshokus on the other side of the aisle, all beaming back at her and waving furiously. She returned their smiles tenfold, giving them a small wave before moving on. A large contingent of former Honnouji academy non-athletic club members were present, all sporting their signature starred berets and dabbing their eyes as their idol walked down the aisle. Ryuko was surprised to see that Mikisugi and Tsumugu had accepted her invitation and actually shown up. Tsumugu, always his serious self, gave Ryuko and Nonon a small nod as the smoke from his cigarette wisped up into the air. Mikisugi smiled warmly, his once bright blue hair now tinged with gray.

Hououmaru sat perched with perfect posture on the edge of her seat. Her signature sunglasses glinted in the bright sun as she turned her head to look, giving a small smile towards the four women walking down the aisle. Iori sat next to her, one side of his mouth turned upwards as he eyed the fashion choices of Ryuko and Nonon approvingly.

Nonon's father sat in the front row, hands folded officially in his lap and looking proud. His silver hair was cropped close to his head, and his sharp features belied an instant resemblance to his daughter despite how tall he was. Ryuko watched as his eyes met her wife-to-be's, and he smiled softly and nodded once. She returned the gesture, returning her gaze to the raised platform ahead of them, Satsuki and Mako already having taken their places to either side.

As Ryuko and Nonon mounted the platform, their officiant greeted them, his blue hair blowing slightly in the breeze as he adjusted his glasses.

“Are you two *really* ready to be married?” Inumuta asked sarcastically, appraising them both. Nonon scowled.

“You bet your ass we are, Dog. Get movin'.” Nonon spat, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear.

“Be nice, Inumuta.” Satsuki said over Nonon's shoulder, looking disapprovingly over at him.

“Very well, Satsuki-sama.” Inumuta gulped, clasping his hands in front of him.

“I shall be very brief, as I'm sure you two will appreciate. Nonon Jakuzure, will you take Ryuko Matoi to be your betrothed? Do you commit yourself to her happiness and self-fulfillment as a person? Do you promise to love, honor, and trust her in sickness and in health, in adversity and prosperity, and to be true and loyal to her so long as you both shall live?” Inumuta asked officially, looking both of them over as he did so.

“I do.” Nonon's response was immediate.

“Ryuko Matoi, do you promise to do the same for Nonon Jakuzure?”

“Yes, I do.” Ryuko said with no hesitation, holding Nonon's small hand and staring deep into her watery eyes.

“Then, by the power vested in me I now pronounce you married. I encourage you to kiss as a symbol of the beginning of your lives together.” Inumuta finished as the assembled guests all stood and began applauding.

Nonon and Ryuko didn't hear it. Ryuko had already wrapped her arm around Nonon's waist, Nonon placing a slender hand on Ryuko's cheek. They stared deep into each others' eyes, smiling as their worlds completely froze. They kissed, just like they had done a million times before, but for the first time connected by marriage. It was mind-blowing, heart-exploding and neither one of them wanted to let it end.

When it did end, it began a whirlwind that would carry them all the way into the wee hours of the following morning. Ryuko had carried Nonon all the way to their venue for the reception, a nearby hotel on the shores of Osaka bay. The others had followed, all wishing them well and laughing along with them as if it was the best day of their lives. For Nonon and Ryuko, it definitely was.

The reception was raucous and loud, as one might expect from such an incomprehensible group. Alcohol flowed like water as Satsuki and Mako both led their own toasts to the newlyweds, one poised and dignified and the other merry and jovial. Ryuko shared a group hug with her entire adoptive family, Sukuyo bursting into tears at the thought of their “little Ryuko” growing up and getting married, even after all this time. Hours later, when everyone had said their goodbyes and Nonon and Ryuko were prepared to leave for their honeymoon, Sukuyo had sneaked a bundle of her famous croquettes into Ryuko's hands.

“For the trip.” She said with a sweet smile, Nonon and Ryuko thanking her profusely before leaving.

The roads were bare this late at night, and Ryuko and Nonon munched on the warm croquettes as they drove south around the rim of Osaka bay, away from civilization. The Ferrari's engine hummed, Nonon propping her legs up on the dashboard as Ryuko ran lazy circles on the skin between her stockings and panties with her thumb. Soft jazz seeped from the radio as Ryuko shifted up and down, swinging them around lazy ocean roads to their destination.

Hours later they arrived at a small seaside cottage, rented for them for the weekend and far from any and all distractions. Ryuko parked the Ferrari close to the small house, exiting quickly and opening Nonon's door for her before going to unlock the front door of the abode. Ryuko became easily distracted, flipping on lights and preparing the house for their stay.

“Hey, baka.”

Ryuko turned around, her jaw almost hitting the floor. Nonon was standing seductively in the doorway, her read end propped against the door jamb along with her upper back, one foot propped backward in order to accentuate her form. She bit a finger between her teeth, fluttering her eyelids.

“Aren't ya gonna carry me in?” Nonon purred, smiling at Ryuko as she approached feverishly.

Hands wrapped around Nonon's back and her exposed upper legs, Ryuko was once again reminded for the millionth time just how soft Nonon's skin was. Reminders became constant as Ryuko laid Nonon gently down on the bed, pulling her dress up and over her head, careful not to destroy her meticulously-crafted bun too much. They kissed and kissed, as if they had only just discovered it, rolling to and from from one side of the bed to the other.

A brief moment of lucidity came, and they held each other at arm's length, staring deep into each others' eyes for what seemed to be the millionth time that day. Nonon reached up and brushed Ryuko's life fiber bundle from her face, smiling warmly.

“I love you, Ryuko.” She said.

“I love you too, Nonon.” Ryuko responded with a toothy grin, before burying her face in Nonon's slender neck, kissing and sucking as she worked up to her ear.

“What say we consummate this thing, princess?” Ryuko whispered, her voice deep and colored with desire. Nonon snorted, burying her hand in the back of Ryuko's hair and pulling her back to face her.

“I thought you'd never ask, transfer.”

They melted into each other then, sealing their matrimony in a way only they could. Forgoing sleep, they held hands wordlessly for hours, witnessing their first sunrise over the calm Pacific as newlyweds. They were so unshakably solid in their commitment, that neither of them could possibly be happier.

Ryuko and Nonon had both been through so much. Seen so much, done so much.

But, as they both thought of all the insane, improbable, inexplicable events that had lead them to this point, they smiled.

Their life together was only just beginning.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you all so much for sticking with me through the first fanfic that I started writing. It has been an immense joy to write about these characters, and to do it for such a wonderful and receptive audience. For those of you craving more, I suggest you all give my profile a look, as I have many more Kill la Kill offerings to show you. Thanks!

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